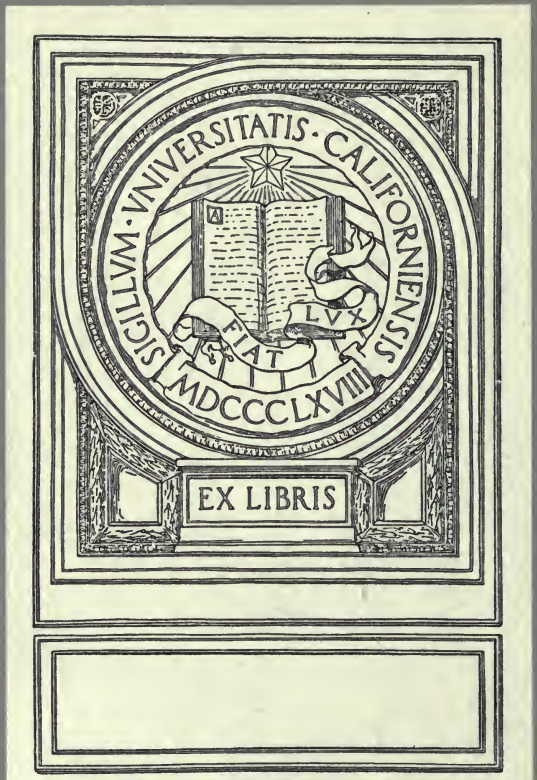
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THE EARLY ITALIAN PAINTERS: THEIR ART AND TIMES

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The Crucifixion *No. 1166*

ANTONELLO DA MESSINA

(See page 179)

THE EARLY ITALIAN PAINTERS: THEIR ART AND TIMES AS ILLUSTRATED FROM EXAMPLES OF THEIR WORK IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON. BY MRS. C. R. PEERS

WITH EIGHT PLATES IN COLOUR
AND TWENTY-TWO IN HALF-TONE

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To C. R. P.

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My grateful acknowledgments are due to Miss Z. Sinclair and Mr. Oliver Hobhouse for their kindly criticism of my MS., to Mr. J. Murray Kendall for his help in describing the armour, and last and chiefly to Mr. G. F. Hill, whose sympathy and learning have been alike inexhaustible.

G. K. P.

PREFACE

THE present writer once dreamed of a museum, and in one of the cases was a little feather, and on its card was written, " Feather from Angel's wing. Picked up on the floor of Heaven."

Now the feather was beautiful and white and small, but, torn from its celestial surroundings, might as well have belonged to a goose as an angel. In heaven the angel lost it; on earth it was tabulated, given a label, and put safely in a glass case: its material conditions were perfect but—it was no longer in heaven.

Never in all the years since they were painted have the great pictures of the world been so well seen and so well cared for as they are now. In huge rooms, clean and well lighted, warm and bare, with the noise of countless alien feet for ever clattering over their polished floors, there the poor pictures hang. They have been dragged from the churches and palaces for which they were painted, sold and dismembered, one panel going to Paris, another to London, and a third to Berlin. Now they are prized as being among the nation's greatest treasures, and they are seen under conditions of ease and comfort by hundreds of people every day; but there is one flaw in an otherwise perfect arrangement: they, like the little white feather, have been torn from their natural surroundings.

They were painted at a time when comfort and security scarcely existed, but when life was full-flavoured and lived with the utmost zest. At the present day we are so afraid of losing or impairing our comfort that our very virtues and vices are practised with reservations, but the people of the Middle and Renaissance Ages made no such reservations. The saints embraced virtue gloriously, and the sinners were no whit behind them in the devotion they gave to sin, and there was no place for the tentative, tepid man. Men and women seldom lived to a great age, but their short lives were packed with sufficient experience to supply the lot of a dozen men and women of our time.

Art in those days was not the especial province of the rich or educated, for art was as completely a part of their life as machinery is a part of ours. The Sienese made public holiday when Duccio's great altar-piece was finished and set in its place in the cathedral, and Vasari tells us of the travelling " painter of small price " who went about painting tabernacles for peasants.

And from their pictures, too, we see that the love of music was universal; from the poor shepherds and countrymen in the fields to the myriad angels in the courts of heaven, all are playing or singing. The instruments of the rich and great no doubt cost a great deal of money, but those who were not rich clearly contented themselves with homely instruments that would make a noise.

Now we have taken the pictures from the dark churches and palaces and very sensibly we have put them where they will be of the greatest use to the greatest number, but in doing so the pictures have lost

their true atmosphere; and this book is a very inadequate and modest attempt by one whose sole qualification is a great love of the pictures, to put before the young student the relation of the painter and his art to his life and times, and to bring out the romantic and human, as well as the artistic side of the pictures.

The pictures have been chosen in an entirely arbitrary fashion, and the most famous masters of the Renaissance have been left untouched for two reasons: first because a literature has grown up round each of their great names, and secondly because, being for all time, their paintings do not illustrate the manners and customs of their own as do those of lesser men. Some of the legends of the saints have been retold because they too entered into the life of the people, for they wondered and marvelled where we smile. The stories have been taken from the "Golden Legend," written by Jacobus De Voragine, about 1270.

For the rest, "if I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain to.

"For as it is hurtful to drink wine or water alone; and as wine mingled with water is pleasant and delighteth the taste: even so speech finely framed delighteth the ears of them that read the story. And here shall be an end."

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CHAPTER I

Tuscan School

THE earliest pictures we have in the National Gallery are the Graeco-Roman portraits, painted in Egypt about the second century after Christ. It is well to look at them carefully because, though not very beautiful, they are among the few paintings of the ancients still left to us.

We have at the present day a certain number of genuine Greek statues, and we also have innumerable copies of them, and of lost and destroyed works, made by the Romans, so that we can really form a very fair idea of the beauty and perfection of Greek sculpture.

The Greek sculptors were the greatest the world has ever seen, and their works have served as models for artists from that time to this. It is, therefore, only natural to suppose that the Greeks, being pre-eminent in sculpture, were also great in painting, but though there are legends of wonderful paintings, none of the best period have come down to us.

When the Romans conquered the Greeks they copied their art without quite understanding it, because they were not artistic in the same way, and for that reason their painting and sculpture was always inferior to that

of the Greeks. Still, they knew, just as we know, that the Greeks were very great artists indeed, so they went on painting and carving as far as they could in the Greek manner, and that is called the Graeco-Roman style.

The portraits that hang at the top of the stairs as we enter the National Gallery were painted by Graeco-Roman artists living at Alexandria. The Egyptians embalmed the bodies of the dead and wrapped them in mummy cloths, and at the head of the mummy they fastened the portrait of the dead man or woman. These pictures were once fastened to mummies, and were discovered in 1888 by Professor Flinders Petrie, in an ancient cemetery at Hawara, in Egypt. They are painted on panels of thin wood, and the medium used was wax, that is to say, the paints were mixed with melted wax instead of oil or water, and as the wax hardened very quickly the paintings have a rough, lumpy look.

It must have been very difficult to paint in such a medium, but nevertheless the artists sometimes produced the most life-like portraits. Such is No. 1265, the portrait of an elderly man[1]; his eyes are deep-set and sad, but there is a look of humour and understanding in the face that tells of a nature that saw life whole, with its joys, its sorrows, and its humanity. In this picture the mummy cloth was pressed down when the wax was still wet, and the impression can be traced in the drapery round the shoulders.

[1] The numbers on the pictures in the National Gallery are never altered, but the pictures are often moved from room to room. They have therefore been described under the headings of the various schools, and the number is given in every instance.

Portrait of an Elderly Man *No. 1265*

GRÆCO-ROMAN SCHOOL

UNIV. OF
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Now soon after these portraits were painted, that is to say, about A.D. 200, artists ceased to think for themselves and began to paint entirely by rule, and for about a thousand years they followed, as far as they could, the methods of the masters who lived before them. The National Gallery has no pictures of this period, so that we can go on to what concerns us much more closely, the beginning of a new style of painting, which leads directly to the painting of our own times.

The earliest example in the Gallery is No. 564, "The Virgin and Child, with Scenes from the Lives of the Saints," by Margaritone, (*b.* about 1216–*d.* before 1299.) Margaritone lived at Arezzo in Tuscany, and he is therefore described as belonging to the Tuscan school.

At the present day Italy is ruled by one king, and all the Italians have the same government and obey the same laws. In the Middle Ages, however, when the pictures which we are about to consider were painted, the country was divided into a number of states, some so small as to be only a few miles in circumference, each having its own ruler and laws, and its inhabitants their own peculiar dialect and dress. It is therefore not surprising that the painters of a particular district should share certain peculiarities of style, and for purposes of study they may be roughly grouped together and spoken of as belonging to the Tuscan, Sienese, Umbrian, Venetian schools, etc.

At first it is not easy to recognize the points of difference and resemblance between the schools, yet by looking carefully at a great many pictures, all painted at about the same date, a beginning can be

made. But first it is necessary to say something about the materials used.

The Italian artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did not paint on canvas, nor did they use oil-colours.

Instead of canvas they stretched linen or leather on panels of wood, and, making a paste of glue mixed with a powder made of bones ground fine, painted several layers of it on the leather or linen; they were thus able to get the raised surfaces and pricked patterns that we so often see under the gold and paint of the early pictures.

This paste was called gesso; for their gold backgrounds they used thin gold leaf, which was put on with size and when quite dry polished and burnished. The colours were mixed with yolk of egg and glue, and the use of oil as a medium did not come into general use in Italy till well after the middle of the fifteenth century. Andrea dal Castagno, about 1410–1457, is said to be one of the first Italian painters to make use of it.

The Tuscan school, which we shall consider first, includes, of course, all the painters living in the cities of that province, with one exception. Siena, though it was one of the chief cities of Tuscany, had a school of its own, because its painters and indeed the entire population showed marked characteristics of a nature quite unlike the rest of Tuscany.

The Tuscans had a passion for intellectual liberty, and for stating in precise terms the discoveries they had made. In his epic of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory Dante first put into words the whole conception of mediæval

thought of the relation of God to man. Macchiavelli systematized the logical intellectual theories of the rulers of the Renaissance. Galileo, who discovered that the earth moved round the sun, when he was forced by the Inquisition formally to deny what he knew to be the truth, added the rider, " And still it moves ! "

In all these men we find this intense devotion to intellectual liberty, and the painters were no whit behind.

The minds of the masters of the Tuscan school were extraordinarily fresh and vigorous. When once they had discovered some new and improved principle they immediately made it their own and reached onwards to grasp something else that had come into sight. Never did they stop or rest, or cease for one moment to take the keenest and most vivid interest in the world around them. And it was the Tuscan school more than any other that solved the problems of drawing and perspective for the rest of Italy.

In the " Virgin and Child, with Scenes from the Lives of the Saints," we find Margaritone throwing off, as far as possible, the trammels of rule and convention and using his own eyes and brain. In the large oval centre, it is true, the artist has been to some extent overborne by tradition, for the Virgin's face reminds us at once of the Graeco-Roman portraits. Margaritone has not painted a woman with a little child on her lap. This calm and dignified figure of the Virgin is a picture of the Queen of Heaven seated on a golden throne with a crown set with precious stones upon her head ; on her knees she holds not a baby, but

a little wee man as calm and dignified as herself, holding up his hand in blessing. Margaritone was here painting as he had been taught, by rule, according to the manner of the Greeks: it would not have been considered right in those days to paint a picture of this kind representing the Virgin as a woman and Christ as a little child. In only one place do we feel that the painter has allowed himself a free hand, and that is in the pattern of the Virgin's red robe; doubtless he copied some beautiful material that specially struck his fancy. So much for what was very likely considered the most important part of this big picture. But when we come to the eight little pictures that surround the large oval we find something quite different—Margaritone wants to tell us some stories, and he feels that the first thing to be done is to tell them clearly, so he thinks of the story first and of the rules afterwards.

In the first picture at the top on the left, Margaritone is telling us the story of the birth of Christ. The Virgin (you will notice that in general style she is very like the figure in the oval centre) is lying down, supporting her head on her hand while she looks at her little Baby in His cradle, and behind the cradle is the head of the ox. They are in a dark cave with a steep roof, and above to the left we see two angels, while on the right another angel is "telling the tidings of great joy" to three shepherds. In front of the cave are some little bushes and two goats (one of these is standing on his hind legs and nibbling the leaves), and then comes another tier of bushes and two sheep. Right in front sits Joseph, but his face has been so much rubbed and damaged that it is difficult to make out.

The Virgin and Child, with Scenes from the Lives of the Saints *No. 564*

MARGARITONE

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The next picture to the right is the legend of the martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist. It is said that St. John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil by order of Domitian, Emperor of Rome, in the presence of his senators, but miraculously the oil did not scald the Saint, and he came forth from the cauldron unharmed.

See how well and simply Margaritone has told this story. In the middle of the picture is the cauldron with St. John inside it, and on either side are men who with long forks are feeding the flames, while the senators stand behind them. St. John is raising his hands in prayer, and above is an angel whose outspread wings fill the upper part of the picture, while his hands are laid in protection on the Saint's shoulders.

Directly beneath the picture of the birth of Christ we have the martyrdom of St. Katherine of Alexandria. On the right stands the wicked Emperor Maxentius, with all his court behind him; in the centre is the executioner brandishing his sword. He has just beheaded Katherine, who is still kneeling, though her head has fallen from her shoulders; an angel has caught it in a napkin, which he held in readiness, and above we see him flying away with his burden. At the top of the picture we have the burial of St. Katherine by angels on Mount Sinai.

Under the picture of the martyrdom of St. John we have a story from the life of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, in Lycia. We are told that the Saint persuaded the heathen to break the idols they had worshipped and to cut down the groves of sacred trees. This greatly incensed the Devil, so he made a pot of magic oil which

would burn stones and water, and then, fearing to approach the holy man himself, he disguised himself as a poor woman and set sail in a little boat. Soon he met another ship full of pilgrims who were going to visit St. Nicholas. The Devil brought his little boat alongside, and, hailing them, said, " I greatly wish to visit the holy Saint Nicholas, but I am a poor woman and cannot go so far. Take this pot of oil for me as a gift to the saint, I pray you, and anoint with it the walls of his church."

The pilgrims, seeing only a poor woman, took the vessel of oil, and bidding the Devil farewell continued their journey. They had not gone far when St. Nicholas himself appeared dressed as a bishop and said to them in a soft voice, " What did that woman say to you and what did she bring ? "

Then the pilgrims related faithfully all that had passed, and when they had ended St. Nicholas said, " That woman was the Devil himself in disguise, and in proof of what I say, pour the oil into the sea." Which being done a great fire immediately arose in the sea and continued to burn for many hours.

In " Alice in Wonderland," when Alice asked Humpty Dumpty the meaning of the word " slithy," Humpty Dumpty explained it by telling her that it meant two words, " lithe " and " slimy." " You see," said Humpty Dumpty, " it's like a portmanteau ; there are two meanings packed up into one word." Now we find that the old painters often packed up several pictures into one big one, and this picture is a good example of the plan.

The picture (a complete composition in itself) is

made up of three different scenes. To the left we see the Devil disguised as a woman in his little boat giving the oil to the pilgrims; on the right St. Nicholas has just appeared to them and is making his inquiries; while in front one of the pilgrims is pouring the magic oil into the sea and flames are rising from the water. The picture of St. Katherine is another on the same plan: we have the two scenes of her martyrdom and her burial in the same picture.

In the second group of four pictures we have first the legend of St. John raising Drusiana from the dead. Drusiana was a good and holy woman of Ephesus, who had been taught by St. John and who had loved her master very dearly. For many years St. John was in exile, and just before he was allowed to go back to Ephesus Drusiana died, and as he entered the city her friends brought her dead body and laid it down before St. John saying, "Here is Drusiana, who loved you so much and obeyed all your commands and who desired nothing so much as to behold your face again. And now you are here and she cannot see you." And all the people wept. Then St. John told them to fold back the clothes from the bed, and he cried in the hearing of all, "Drusiana, my Lord God Jesus Christ raiseth thee. Arise and go into thy house and make ready that I may come." And Drusiana rose and went into her house and all men marvelled and rejoiced at the wondrous sight. St. John, who stands nearly in the middle of the picture, is just lifting his hand as he calls to Drusiana. She is in a big bed covered with a red coverlet, and four men have been carrying it by the posts. She sits up as she hears his voice. On either

side of the picture are the crowds who are looking on at the miracle that is being performed.

We now come to a story from the life of St. Benedict. This saint fled from the world and lived a lonely life as a hermit in the desert. He made his home in a pit at some distance from the monastery where his friend Romanus lived, and because there was no way of getting down to the pit where St. Benedict was, Romanus used to ring a bell to let his friend know he was coming; then he tied a loaf to a cord and let it down into the pit.

Notwithstanding the fact that he was so very far from the world St. Benedict was grievously tormented by the Devil. First he came in the disguise of a black bird and pecked at the hermit, giving him no peace; and when that was of no avail he reappeared dressed as a beautiful woman. To escape from him St. Benedict stripped himself and flung himself into a bed of nettles, that the stings might make him forget his temptations. In this picture we see him stretched in the nettles and the Devil disguised as the woman seated at a little distance, while behind is what looks like the crater of a volcano, but is really the entrance to St. Benedict's pit. Inside the pit is a great tongue of flame, from which no doubt the Devil has come. The dark lumps above the pit look as though they were stones and lava thrown out of the volcano, but if they are looked at very closely it will be seen that they are the foliage of trees that grow on the steep sides of the pit; the trunks and branches are so faint and faded that they can only just be distinguished.

Below the picture of St. John raising Drusiana we get another story from the life of St. Nicholas. It

chanced that one day the bishop was entertaining three princes, and during the feast news was brought to him that the consul of Myra was about to behead three innocent knights. Hastily the holy man rose from the banquet, begging the princes to go with him, and when they got to the place of execution they found the knights kneeling, their eyes bound with a white cloth and their hands tied behind them, waiting the stroke of the executioner, who was brandishing his sword above their heads. St. Nicholas snatched the sword from the executioner's hand and flung it from him, and unbound the knights and set them free. Then he went to the palace of the wicked consul, who, seeing him coming, had the gates closed; but this did not deter St. Nicholas, for he had them broken open. The consul, seeing that he could not escape, came forward to salute him, but St. Nicholas said, "How dare you salute me when you would have committed so great a crime? Had it not been for me these three innocent knights would have been beheaded." Then the consul, after having been severely reproved by St. Nicholas, repented and the three princes begged the holy man to forgive him, which, after a while, he consented to do.

In the eighth and last picture we see the dragon that swallowed St. Margaret. It is related that St. Margaret was swallowed by a dragon, which immediately afterwards burst asunder and she was able to come forth unharmed.

Margaritone has painted a particularly formidable dragon: not only has he a head in the usual place, but he has one at the end of his tail too. The saint is just disappearing down his throat, but though her figure is

a good deal rubbed, and is a little difficult to make out, you will see that she is also represented as coming out of the dragon again, safe and sound. St. Margaret wears a crown, and her hands are lifted in prayer as she is about to descend the dragon's throat, and they are in the same position when she issues forth again.

The next picture belonging to the Tuscan school is No. 565, "Virgin and Child with adoring Angels," which is thought to be by Cimabue, who lived a little later than Margaritone, for he is first mentioned in 1272, and last mentioned in 1302. If we compare this picture with the centre oval of Margaritone's (for it is the same in subject and idea) we shall find that Cimabue has made an immense advance on the earlier painter.

The Virgin, though her face still reminds us of those of the women in the Graeco-Roman portraits, is less stiff and more human, and the little Christ is better drawn, though He is still quite unlike a small child. Margaritone has painted two angels, one on either side of the Virgin and Child. Cimabue also has angels, but how much more beautiful they are! At first it looks as though the six angels were arranged on either side of the throne in exactly the same attitudes, but a closer examination will show that Cimabue, though keeping to his pattern or arrangement as a whole, has varied the angels themselves a little. Compare the two lowest ones; the angel on the right has her hands crossed on her breast, while the angel on the left only shows one hand. The other four lean forward with their hands on the Virgin's throne.

Last, but by no means least, is the great difference in the colouring of the two pictures. The general im-

pression of Margaritone's picture is, that it is painted in black and red and gold ; it is rather like a mosaic made of little bits of glass and stone. In Cimabue's picture we get much less gold, but how beautifully it is used in the pattern on the angel's robes.

In 1266 the great painter Giotto was born at Colle in Tuscany (*d.* 1337). Unfortunately the National Gallery does not possess a single picture by him, but some idea of his wonderful power may be gained from the works of his pupils.

The painters of the Middle Ages, though they were greatly honoured by their fellow-citizens, were craftsmen only ; they were members of the town guilds and had workshops like the masons, goldsmiths, leather merchants, armourers, etc., and the more celebrated a painter was the more crowded with pupils did his workshop become. If a boy living at Florence while Giotto was working there wished to become a painter, he would ask Giotto to take him as an apprentice, and if the painter consented to do so he would at first be expected to sweep out the studio or workshop and do all sorts of odd jobs. Then he would be set to grind his master's colours, a work that needed much patience, for we are told that the apprentices were expected to go on grinding for half an hour or an hour at a time. In return for these services the lad would be taught to draw and paint and even allowed to work on the unimportant parts of his master's pictures.

He would naturally be greatly influenced by his master, and in his turn would hand on the methods he had learnt to his own pupils. A tradition of painting was in this way continued from generation to genera-

tion, and only slowly modified by men of great genius and originality like Giotto himself.

A painting which may be attributed to one of Giotto's pupils is No. 276, "The Apostles."

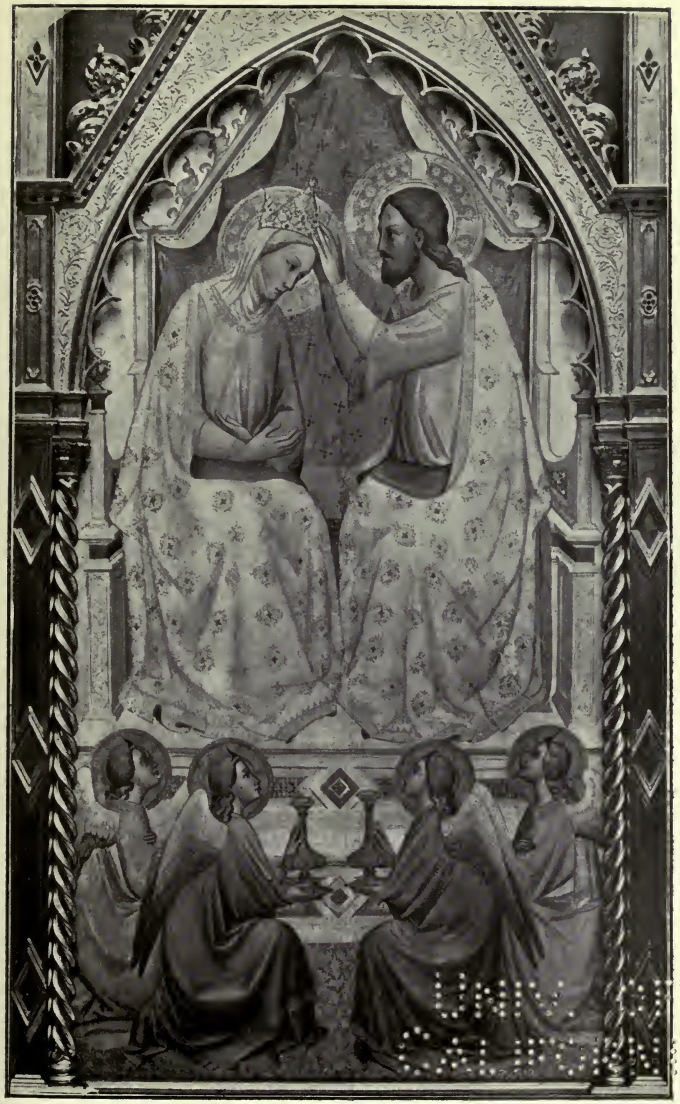
These two heads are painted in fresco, that is to say, the picture was painted on a wall while the plaster was still wet, and the colour sank in as soon as it was laid on. Italy, having a dry and sunny climate, was specially suited to fresco, and the painters were thus able to cover far larger spaces than would have been possible had they been forced, as the northern artists were, to keep within the narrow limits of wooden panels.

This beautiful fragment has been torn "from one of the wall paintings formerly in the chapel of San Giovanni Battista, in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, at Florence. The subject of the composition to which these figures belong was the burial of John the Baptist." [1]

It may well be attributed to one of the men who worked under Giotto, and it shows how greatly he advanced in his art, for not only are the heads life-like, but for the first time we get emotion successfully represented; the saints are sad and bowed with grief, and look like real men capable of sorrow and joy like ourselves.

No. 568, "The Coronation of the Virgin," is by Taddeo Gaddi (*b.* before 1300–*d.* 1366), Giotto's godson and favourite pupil. He was far inferior to his master, and though there is a calm and harmonious beauty in this picture, yet it is at the same time curiously flat and pale: it almost looks like a pattern.

[1] Official Catalogue of the National Gallery.



The Coronation of the Virgin *No. 568*

TADDEO GADDI

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First we have the two principal figures facing one another, the Virgin bending her head to receive the crown that Christ is placing upon it. Below are four angels, or rather two pairs of angels, for while all four are kneeling in precisely the same attitudes, the two middle ones are holding two golden vases of the same pattern. The Virgin's face is full of calm humility as she meekly bows her head, her robe is of the palest blue, covered with a pattern of gold, the angels' wings are shaded from deep blue and green to softest peach colour, while on their heads they each wear a little diadem of red flame to show their ardent love. This painter is no longer content to use plain gold, but makes patterns on the gesso with a sharp instrument and then paints the gold over it. He has done this everywhere : on the back of the throne, on the carpet where the angels are kneeling, on the haloes and robes. What time and what loving care Gaddi must have spent on this stiff set picture. It has scarcely any movement in it and yet it is so beautiful; it makes us think of sweet and gentle things.

As we have seen, the painters were craftsmen, and sometimes their crafts overlapped; Andrea Orcagna (1308–1368), for instance, was a goldsmith, architect, and sculptor as well as a painter. He was influenced both by Giotto and by the artists of the Sienese school.

In No. 581, "St. John the Baptist, with St. John the Evangelist and St. James the Greater," St. John the Evangelist stands on the left with his book; next to him is the Baptist, and though his robe of pink and blue, embroidered with gold, is so gay, yet it is easy to see how hard a life he has led in the desert, for the

veins and muscles stand out on his emaciated hands and arms, and beneath his rich draperies is the rough garment of camel's hair which he wears next his skin. On the other side of St. John the Baptist stands St. James the Apostle. In one hand he carries a book, in the other a pilgrim's staff, which is shod with iron and has a sharp-pointed end.

It is said that St. James was beheaded by Herod in Judea, and after his death his disciples put his body on a ship without either sail or rudder, but angels manned the vessel and brought her safe to port in Spain. Then the disciples took the body of St. James ashore and laid it upon a great stone, which immediately became as soft as wax and received the body within it. They went to the queen of that part of the country, Lupa, and told her what they had done, and begged that she would build a fine tomb for the body of their beloved master; but Lupa was a heathen and a wicked woman, and instead of granting their prayer she threw them into prison. While she was at dinner an angel opened the door of their prison and set them free, and when she sent some knights in pursuit, a bridge which they had to cross broke, and the knights all fell into the water and were drowned. This made the queen still more angry and she determined to overcome the disciples by guile, so she told them that they might harness some of her wild bulls to a chariot and place their master's body in it and so bring it to her palace. This she did to the end that the disciples should be trampled to death by the furious animals. The disciples, however, stood their ground and made the sign of the cross when they saw the wild bulls coming, and the creatures be-

came as gentle as lambs and meekly allowed themselves to be yoked to the chariot. The disciples then laid the body of St. James upon it and brought it to the palace of the queen, and Lupa was so overcome by this marvellous event that she at once became a Christian and turned her palace into a church, where the body of St. James at last found rest.

Long afterwards his body was translated and set in a shrine at Compostella, which became a very celebrated place of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, and for this reason St. James himself is often represented as a pilgrim carrying a staff and scallop shell.

We now come to a big picture, No. 569, a "Coronation of the Virgin," by Orcagna. It was painted for the church of San Pietro, in Florence, but large as it is, it is only a part of the complete design, for the nine pictures near it all belong to the same altar-piece.

570, "The Trinity."
571–2, "Angels Adoring."
573, "The Nativity."
574, "The Adoration of the Kings."
575, "The Resurrection."
576, "The Three Maries at the Sepulchre."
577, "The Ascension of Christ."
578, "The Descent of the Holy Spirit."

In the middle panel the Virgin is seated with her Son on a double throne, and Christ has just placed the crown upon her head; behind them at the back two little angels are peeping round with innocent curiosity, and in front of the throne is a group of small angels who are singing and making music on various instruments. "In the central compartment note the portative organ,

with its gimlet-shaped keys all of one light colour, and apparently, even in that early date, chromatic in disposition. Five large drone pipes may be recognized, from their being out of scale with the melody pipes. The second instrument in the angelic band is a harp, the comb holding the wrest, or turning pins, being held here in an animal's mouth. A third angel is furnished with a zither, also a favourite mediæval instrument. It is ornamented in ebony and ivory, and has a plectrum guard inserted in the belly, as in a modern mandoline. The fourth angel has a viol of a clumsy form : it took another two hundred years to arrive at the graceful outline of the violin. The fifth has a psaltery—one angel has a bagpipe : the chaunter or melody-pipe has eight holes, the same number the Highland bagpipe has now."[1]

On either side of the middle panel is a crowd of apostles, saints, and martyrs ranged row on row, their heads all turned towards Christ and His mother in silent adoration. There are so many of them that it is impossible to tell all their names and stories, but it is easy to identify a few of those who carry their emblems, and a complete list is to be found in the official Catalogue of the National Gallery.

At the foot of the left-hand panel is St. Peter ; in one hand he carries his keys, while in the other he bears a model of the church for which the picture was painted, San Pietro Maggiore. Next to him is St. Bartholomew with his flayer's knife in his hand : he carries it because the legend goes that he was martyred by being skinned alive. After St. Bartholomew comes St.

[1] "The Hobby Horse," No. 1, 1893, A. J. Hipkins.

Stephen, a stone on his head showing how he came by his death. Some distance behind him is St. Francis of Assisi, and last in the row is the kneeling figure of St. Mary Magdalene. Above her is St. Lucy with her lamp, and near her Pope Gregory, with the dove whispering in his ear.

In the bottom corner of the right-hand panel is St. Paul with book and drawn sword to balance St. Peter on the other side; then St. Matthew, and after him St. Lawrence, who matches St. Stephen; St. Dominic with his lily to pair with St. Francis; and finally St. Katherine with her wheel, and above St. Agnes carrying her lamb, and not far from her St. Nicholas with the three pieces of gold.

When this splendid picture, or rather group of pictures, so full of gold and colour, is looked at closely it is at once noticeable that it is almost entirely without atmosphere. And what *is* atmosphere? Before we go any further it will be well to give some explanation of its meaning when used in describing a picture.

Atmosphere means the air surrounding the earth, but this air, because, though invisible to us, it is laden with moisture, profoundly modifies the appearance of everything we see. Suppose, for instance, you were to paint a picture of a boy in a field playing cricket. You might draw his figure all right, and his bat and the wickets, and you might put in the grass and the hedge and trees at the end of the field against which his figure seems to stand out, but what you would find it very difficult to do would be to give the effect produced by the air through which you see him and the light of the sun that falls upon him, for light and air play upon every-

thing in such a way that the various parts of a scene are blended in one. When a painter attempts to give atmosphere he tries to express a little tiny bit of the world, figures set in the midst of light, colour, and air.

It is perfectly possible to tell a story in a picture without atmosphere. Ask a child to draw this same scene of the boy playing cricket, and you will find he will put in the boy with a bat in his hand and the wickets behind him; there will be no misunderstanding as to what the subject is, but it will not even occur to the child that atmosphere exists.

Now in the early fourteenth century the Tuscan artists were struggling with the technical difficulties of their art; they knew that in drawing, perspective, and colouring they still had many problems to solve, and it was not till these difficulties were overcome that they began to think about atmosphere.

When we look at Orcagna's pictures we see that his figures, for all their stately beauty, are not a part of the world; they are painted from the child's point of view, the figures are symbols to express his meaning.

It is true that in the big central portion of the altarpiece, the want of atmosphere is not so noticeable because the scene is not supposed to take place on earth. But look at No. 576, "The Three Maries at the Sepulchre." The story is told very clearly: there is the empty tomb, the lid has been taken off and the angel sits by; and there are the three women, each bearing a vase of the precious spices; the ground is covered with indefinite flowers to represent a garden, and there are some rocks and trees. Now we are told that the Maries came to the tomb somewhere about dawn, but here

there is no sky, only a golden background. And who could even think of the dawn, that hour of the day that is always full of mystery and hope, in connection with this picture ?

Men only gradually began to feel that figures must be represented as part of the world around them ; compare Orcagna's " Three Maries at the Sepulchre " with No. 1140, Duccio's " Christ Healing the Eyes of the Blind Man," and you will see at once that Duccio has felt his figures as part of the beautiful earth on which he lives.

CHAPTER II

Tuscan School (*continued*)

THE picture to which we now come is No. 580, the altar-piece by Jacopo Landini (about 1340–1390), having for its principal subject St. John the Evangelist lifted up into heaven.

All through the Middle Ages the different monastic orders were great patrons of art, and they vied with each other in building beautiful churches and convents and in adorning them with pictures and frescoes. For a long while these pictures remained on the walls for which they were painted, but many have now been taken down and sold, finding their way into the great picture galleries and museums of Europe. The large altar-pieces were often broken up and divided, one part going to one collection and one to another. In the National Gallery, for instance, we have three pictures from the great altar-piece Duccio painted for the cathedral at Siena, and ten pieces from Orcagna's "Coronation of the Virgin," and when we look at the fragments it is easy to imagine how much more wonderful they looked when the separate pictures were all together in their great frame like gorgeous jewels in a worthy setting and hung in the beautiful churches for which they were painted. Landini's altar-piece, which is fortunately perfect, was painted for the church of

St. John at Prato Vecchio in the Casentino, the painter's birth-place, and though it is by no means one of the largest altar-pieces, yet it gives a good idea of what they were, for it is composed of no less than twenty-two separate pictures.

In the middle panel St. John is being drawn from his open tomb before the altar by God the Father, who is surrounded by apostles and patriarchs.

We have in the left wing St. John the Baptist, St. Bernard, St. Benedict, and St. Scholastica ; and in the right St. Peter, St. Romualdus, St. Katherine of Alexandria, and St. Jerome as a cardinal.

In the predella or base are, from left to right, St. John baptizing converts, St. John on Patmos, and the martyrdom of the Saint.

Then we come to the sixteen small pictures set in the frame. In the apex is a representation of the Trinity ; at the top of the two wings the Annunciation ; beneath the Trinity is the Risen Christ preaching in Hades, and below, on either side, the Harrowing of Hell ; beneath the Angel of the Annunciation, in a little roundel, is St. Michael with sword and scales, and beneath the Virgin are Tobias and the Angel.

In the sides of the frame are set the figures of saints ; in the left St. Benedict, St. Cosmo, and St. Francis ; and in the predella a figure that may be St. Apollonia or St. Lucy.

In the right side of the frame are St. Nicholas with his three pieces of gold, St. Damian, and St. Margaret bursting from the dragon ; and in the predella St. Verdiana.

The three small pictures in the predella are full of

life and vigour. In the first St. John is busy pouring water on the heads of the converts as he signs them with the sign of the cross, and he has already baptized several, for one man is putting on his garment again. Under St. John's directions help is being given to a lame man and a poor woman accompanied by a child. In the middle panel St. John is in the island of Patmos, and as he lies in his trance he sees the vision of Heaven.

The third picture is a very spirited representation of the martyrdom of the Saint. The Emperor Domitian, dressed in his royal robes, is directing the operations, and seeing the Saint is evidently not much incommoded by the heat, he is ordering his servants to stir the fire and blow it up with the big bellows till it becomes a real furnace. Though St. John does not feel the heat the executioners certainly find it too hot, for scorched and terrified by the flames they run back towards safety, while the one man who still faces the fire covers his face with his hands.

It is interesting to note the prominence given to Benedictines in this picture: four out of the eight saints in the two wings belong to that Order or its reformed branches. We have the founder St. Benedict and his sister St. Scholastica; St. Romualdus, who was the first reformer of the Order, his followers being called the Camaldolesi; and St. Bernard, founder of the Cistercian branch of the Benedictines. Landini worked in Florence and was a member of its Company of Painters in 1351. It is to the fact of his having lived in Florence that we owe the introduction of St. Verdiana into the altar-piece, for she was chiefly venerated there, having been a native of that city.

It may be well to give here some account of St. Benedict, who is so often represented in mediæval paintings. He was born in the year 480, and he and his sister Scholastica lived with their parents at Nursia, near Spoleto. At that date, the schools of Rome were the best in the world, so Benedict, who was an unusually bright and clever lad, was sent there that he might be taught by the best masters. He quickly made great progress in his studies and his parents looked forward to a brilliant career for their clever son.

Rome, however, was not only the most learned, it was also the most wicked city in the world, and the young Benedict, horrified by the sin around him, fled from Rome and hid himself in the hills of Subiaco. This part of his history is shown in Magaritone's picture, as we have already seen. He lived in a pit-like cave and his friend the hermit Romanus alone knew of his hiding-place. Romanus came day by day, bringing a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water, and as he drew near the cave he rang the little bell he carried so that St. Benedict might know he was about to lower the loaf and jug into the pit.

St. Benedict dwelt for some time at Subiaco, and the Devil, seeing his blameless life, grievously tormented him ; but the Saint by the strength of his faith was enabled always to put his enemy to flight. At length the austerity and sanctity of his life became well known, and numbers of people, some poor, some wealthy, and some noble, came to him seeking his help and advice. At last a number of hermits who had a settlement not very far from Subiaco begged him to come and rule over them, but St. Benedict, knowing they lived care-

lessly and without heed to the things of Heaven, refused their request and plainly told them that "his condition and manners were not according to theirs"; but the hermits were persistent and would not take no for an answer, and they begged so hard that he would become a father to them that at last he consented.

Soon, however, they repented of their persistence, for St. Benedict insisted on their leading a stricter and more godly life; they found to their dismay that they could no longer do as they pleased, and when they found it was impossible to persuade him to slacken his rule, they became as anxious to get rid of him as they had been to secure him. At last, adding attempted murder to their other sins, they tried to kill him by putting poison in his cup, but before St. Benedict drank he ever made the sign of the cross over the vessel, and now when he did so the cup fell and was smashed to atoms. St. Benedict, seeing that the hermits had offered him poison, said: "God have mercy on you, fair brethren; I said to you well at the beginning, that my condition and manners agreed not with yours, wherefore get to yourselves another father, for I may no longer dwell here." So he went back to Subiaco again. By this time the holiness of his life was well known and men came from all parts to live near him; these he gathered into twelve monasteries, each monastery containing twelve monks, with one monk to rule over the community. For some time the twelve monasteries were full of light and holiness, but in those days men were stubborn and rebellious, and a certain number of the monks were very discontented and found St. Benedict's strict rule hard to bear. One of

the monks, Florentin by name, hated St. Benedict for his goodness and purity, and he tried, as the hermits had done, to take his life. He sent a poisoned loaf to the Saint, but instead of eating it he called his pet raven that was wont to eat from his hand, and suspecting the loaf to be poisoned he bade the bird carry it away to a solitary place where it would be of danger to no one. But the raven was frightened and flew round and about, and would not come near the loaf till St. Benedict commanded, "Take this bread bravely and bear it away." Then the raven hesitated no longer, but flew with it for a day's journey till he found a place sufficiently solitary and there he deposited the loaf, and after three days returned and fed as before from the hand of the Saint. As for the wicked monk Florentin, he was soon punished, for a wall beneath which he was standing fell on him and he was killed. The friends of St. Benedict rejoiced and triumphed, but the Saint made them do penance for their revengeful thoughts.

Now, in those days the worship of the pagan gods still lingered in Italy, and at Monte Cassino there was a temple and image of the god Apollo at which the inhabitants of the surrounding country worshipped; this thing came to the ears of St. Benedict and he straightway left Subiaco and went to Monte Cassino, where he converted the people to the true faith, and after baptizing them he persuaded them to break the image of the god, and cut down the grove of trees sacred to him, and where the temple and the grove had been he built two churches in honour of St. John the Baptist and St. Martin of Tours. Higher up the mountain he founded a monastery that has ever since been con-

sidered the birth-place of the Benedictine Order, because it was from there that St. Benedict issued his famous rules. The monks were vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, and besides these three rules they also undertook to labour with their hands for seven hours a day, and for hundreds of years the Benedictines were the leaders in the art of agriculture; they delighted to build their abbeys in waste places and by dint of ceaseless cultivation to make the desert blossom as the rose. But the abbeys contained not only agriculturalists, but writers and painters as well, because manual labour included the writing, copying, and illuminating of books, for the Benedictines for many centuries numbered the most learned men among their ranks, and kept the lamp of learning alight when elsewhere it was almost extinguished.

St. Benedict spent the rest of his life at Monte Cassino, and his sister St. Scholastica lived also on the mountain in a little lonely cell at a short distance from the monastery. The brother and sister loved each other very tenderly, but St. Benedict, for fear that they should care for one another more than God, would only see his sister once a year.

On the last day they were to meet on earth they talked together for many hours, and when it grew dark St. Benedict prepared to return to his monastery, but St. Scholastica, loath to say good-bye to him for another year, besought him to stay with her a little longer, but he would not. Then she wept, and prayed to God that he would permit her dear brother to remain with her a little longer, and while she yet wept and prayed, a great storm of wind and rain arose, so that it was impossible

for St. Benedict to venture forth. Then said St. Benedict to Scholastica, "God forgive you, sister, for you have prevented me from departing hence." But Scholastica only smiled as she answered, "Fair brother, God is more courteous than you, for you would not listen to me, but He has heard me and has granted me my prayer." And the brother and sister, feeling it was God's will, remained together talking happily of many things all through the night, and when the storm ceased and morning came St. Benedict bade St. Scholastica farewell and went back to his own house.

The third day after he parted from her he looked up and saw a white dove flying up to heaven, and he knew it to be the pure soul of his sister going back to God, for he felt that she was dead and that they would meet no more on earth. And when his own time was come to depart out of the world, he had himself carried into his church, and the monks laid him on the steps of the altar. "And after, among the hands of his disciples, his own hands lifting up to heaven in making his orison, he rendered his soul unto his Creator."

So passed from earth to heaven a great man, for he gathered up and gave direction and impulse to the spirit of his age. Before his time the Christian hermits had been living separately, good, bad, or indifferent lives; they had no organization and no corporate body, and St. Benedict gave them both, by gathering them together in different abbeys and giving them one rule of life.

Contemporary with Landini is Justus of Padua (second half of the fourteenth century), the painter of a Coronation of the Virgin, No. 701 in the Gallery.

This picture is quite small, but it is crowded with figures, and it cannot but be felt that Justus has overcome many of the difficulties with which the earlier painters had to struggle. He can make his paint brush do what he wants. Christ and the Virgin are seated on a beautiful throne surrounded by dazzling rays of light. He wears a crown and holds a slender sceptre in one hand, while with the other He is about to place the Virgin's crown upon her head. She wears a robe of pale blue, powdered with golden stars, and a thin and delicate veil covers her from head to foot. Round the throne are groups of saints and angels, the angels above, six saints on either side, and six more below. St. Francis and St. Dominic, on the left of the throne, are balanced by St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, and immediately below them two monks, with no distinguishing emblem, are balanced by two bishops, probably St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.

The six saints in front, below the throne, three women and three men, are, on the left, St. Katherine, St. Helena, and St. Margaret; and on the right, St. Peter, St. John the Baptist, and St. Paul.

The picture has wings, and at the top of the left wing is the Angel Gabriel with a lily in his hand, while at the top of the right, on the other side, is the Virgin, raising her hands in awe and amazement as she sees the angel coming near. She has been sitting reading at a desk, the lower part of which is a cupboard; the doors are open and we can see two more books inside.

Below the Angel Gabriel is a picture of the birth of Christ, and how happy the Virgin looks as she gives

her baby into the outstretched arms of the woman kneeling to receive Him. The ox and the ass stand behind the wicker manger, and above, just beneath the roof of the stable, three angels watch the holy Child. In front sits Joseph, fast asleep, while another woman is kneeling by the side of a tub half full of water waiting to wash the baby. In the sky, an angel comes flying down to a shepherd, who kneels on the right; he shades his eyes with his hands from the angel's dazzling radiance; his sheep are lying not far from him.

On the other wing, beneath the little picture of the Virgin, we have the Crucifixion. Christ is nailed on the cross, blood flows from His wounded side and drips from His pierced hands. Angels mourn round the cross, while His mother, overcome with grief, is supported by women standing behind her. St. Mary Magdalene, embracing the cross, kneels at its foot; and St. John, clasping his hands, looks up at the figure of Christ. The scene is full of grief, but it is a quiet sadness that has no violence or horror in it, and the rest of this wonderful little picture is full of joyous gladness as quiet as the grief.

Notice the beautiful frame with the hinges of the doors hung on two small pillars. It is not of the same date as the picture, but was made some two hundred years after Justus of Padua lived.

Next in order we may take No. 579, "The Baptism of Christ, with St. Peter and St. Paul. Below, Scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist," by Niccolo di Pietro Gerini (second half of the fourteenth century). The arrangement of this picture is entirely symmetrical. Christ stands in the middle of a stream, on either side

are rocks, with a tree on the top of each cliff. Two angels kneel on the left bank and one holds Christ's blue garment; on the right is St. John the Baptist, pouring water from an earthenware bowl on the head of Christ. Above hovers the dove, and God the Father leans from the clouds; on either side are St. Peter and St. Paul. The little fishes and the ripples in the stream are painted with the greatest care.

The figures have a certain dignity and stateliness in spite of the stiff, angular drawing, and the small pictures in the predella are full of life.

In the first picture Zacharias, vigorously swinging his censer, offers his sacrifice before a little Gothic shrine, and an angel has just come down to tell him the good news that he will have a son, whose name shall be John. In the next compartment the angel's words have come true. Elizabeth lies in a big bed and two attendants are bringing her something to eat; one has what looks like a chicken on a plate, and the other carries a loaf. But Elizabeth does not care for food, she can think of nothing but her joy, and her eyes are fixed on her little son. He is in the arms of an old woman who sits in front, beside the bed; with one hand she feels the water in the tub to see if it is too warm to put the baby in. A younger woman sits on the other side of the basin, holding out a blanket for the baby. Two rolls of swaddling bands lie in front of the tub, and as soon as he has had his bath the baby will be bound up in them, no doubt.

The remaining divisions of the picture represent scenes from the death of John the Baptist. Through the open door of a little tower we see the headless body

M.S.

Herod's Feast *No. 579*

Detail from the predella of The Baptism of Christ with St. Peter and St. Paul, below Scenes from the Life and Death of John the Baptist

NICCOLÒ DI PIETRO GERINI

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of John the Baptist, still kneeling, the hands meekly crossed in prayer.

The adjoining division, which is a large one, is Herod's feast. The king sits beneath a loggia, open on two sides, at the middle of a long table; his great lords and captains on either side. On the extreme left is a musician who is playing on a lute for the daughter of Herodias. She has just stopped dancing, because between her and the lute-player is an attendant, holding in both hands a large dish, and on the dish is the head of John the Baptist. The man has this moment come from that little tower where the body is still kneeling, and he is just going to give the ghastly gift to the girl who has begged it from the king.

Lastly, we come to a little panel which corresponds with the tower picture on the other side, and there we find the wicked Herodias sitting on her throne, while her daughter kneels before her and offers her the head on the charger.

This picture was at one time in the Abbey of Sasso di Camaldoli in the Casentino. As St. Romualdus was the founder of the Camaldolesi it is probable that the two saints at either end of the picture are St. Benedict and St. Romualdus. Were it not for the fact of the pictures having been in an abbey of the Camaldolesi it might be supposed that the saint with the crutch is St. Anthony instead of St. Romualdus, because the crutch is one of St. Anthony's best-known emblems.

On comparing the upper with the lower part of this picture, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that

the painters of the Middle Ages got very tired of painting the same subject again and again. No doubt, like all artists before and since, they painted a certain number of pictures to please their patrons and many more to please themselves. The larger part of this picture may well belong to the former class, and the lower and smaller part to the latter. In the Baptism of Christ the only part the artist seems to have really enjoyed painting is the water with its ripples and little fish swimming about. But how differently he paints directly he is allowed to tell a long story.

When the painters painted their big altar-pictures, they arranged the apostles and saints, patriarchs and martyrs, with care round the central group; they stand dignified and stately, clad in gorgeous garments, rapt in the contemplation of heavenly things. The painters lavished endless pains upon them, but it is always just a little as though they had at the same time written an invisible label over their heads, saying, "These are very holy persons, they are not made of the same clay as you and I." When, however, we come to the stories of these same saints, the painters forget all that, and paint them just like their friends whom they saw going in and out of their houses and met every day. So these small pictures of the life and death of John the Baptist make a little window through which we can look back at the daily life of the Italians of the late fourteenth century.

In the second scene Gerini may very well be representing what he himself saw after the birth of his own little son, only, as he was painting the birth of a great saint he would doubtless make all the surroundings

a little richer and a little finer than they were in his own home.

The next scene we come to is King Herod's feast. It is not, perhaps, very likely that we shall be asked to be present at a banquet at Windsor Castle, but in Gerini's day people lived more simply and very much less privately than they do now. The kings and great nobles feasted daily in the great halls of their castles, and numberless servants and dependents sat at the lower tables or stood watching about them and waiting for their turn to sit and dine. It is therefore quite likely that Gerini is here, again, painting what he had seen; and we know from old chronicles that music and dancing were often performed during the feast. It is also to be supposed that Gerini painted the table manners of the great, customary at the time; notice the way in which Herod and his chief guests hold their knives!

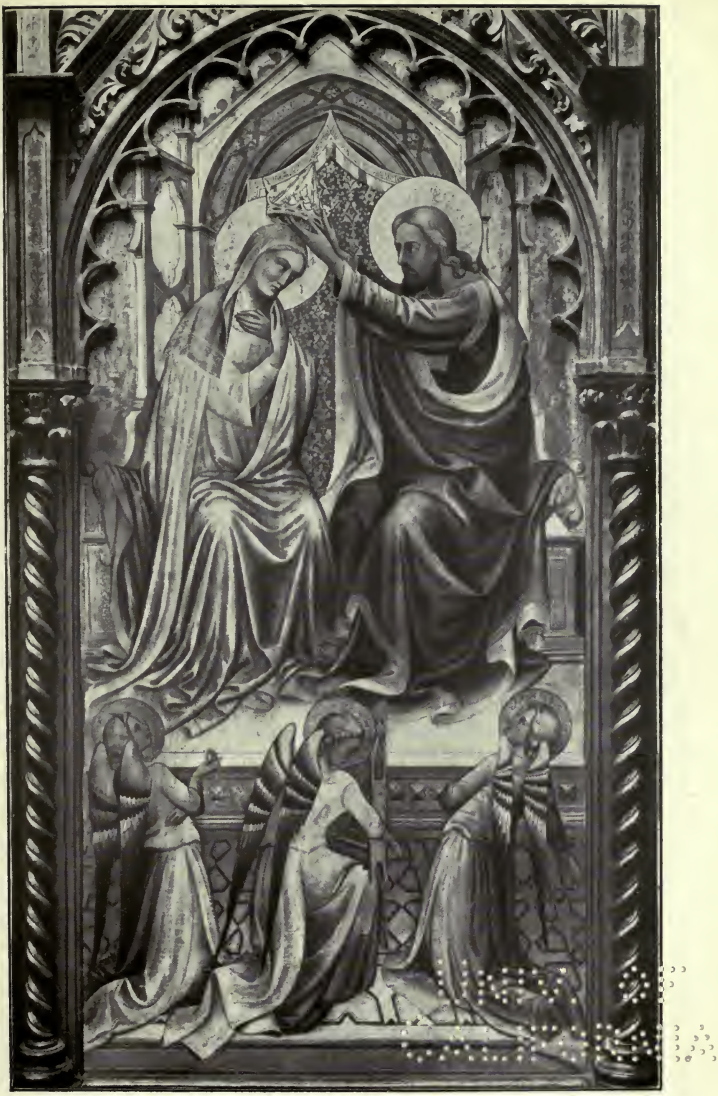
St. Romualdus, who is shown here and in Landini's picture, was born in 956, the son of a nobleman of Ravenna, and from his earliest childhood loved to wander alone in the pine forests near by, rejoicing in the beauty around him and thinking many thoughts.

His father was of a proud and violent disposition, and when Romualdus was about twenty years of age, he slew a man to gain possession of his property. The cruel deed so horrified Romualdus that he determined to renounce the world and go into a monastery that he might do penance for his father's crime. To this end he entered the Order of the Benedictines and went to their monastery at St. Apollinare in Classe, four miles from Ravenna. He quickly found, however, that in the years that had elapsed since the death of

St. Benedict the brethren had fallen away from the ideals set up by their founder, and the monasteries, instead of being houses where men gathered together to live holy lives, had become centres of evil living. These things made Romualdus very sad, and at last he could bear it no longer and he spoke out openly, telling them of their wicked lives and urging them by preaching and example to return to the rules of their order. For a long time the brothers would not listen and only answered by ill-treatment, persecution, and slander; but at last, at the end of thirty years, St. Romualdus gathered round him a band of monks, and settled in Campo Maldoli, a lonely valley in the Apennines. Each brother lived alone in a little hut and gave himself to meditation and prayer and the cultivation of his garden. St. Romualdus changed their monastic dress from black to white to distinguish them, as a reformed branch, from the old Benedictine Order.

Lorenzo Monaco (about 1370–1425), said to have been a pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, is best represented in the Gallery by a "Coronation of the Virgin," No. 1897.

In this picture it is easy to see the tradition of painting that Lorenzo learnt in Gaddi's workshop, but because he was an artist of some originality it is impossible to mistake this picture for one painted by Gaddi himself. It is interesting to compare the two pictures. They are both much the same in shape and size and have the same subject, that is to say, Christ crowning the Virgin above and adoring angels below; yet what an immense difference lies between them. To begin with, the arrangement of Monaco's picture



The Coronation of the Virgin *No. 1897*

LORENZO MONACO

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

is much less simple, for though, except for the greater richness of colouring, the figures of Christ and the Virgin are almost identical, there are three angels in natural attitudes below the throne, instead of Gaddi's two pairs of angels doing exactly the same thing. The middle one half turns her back to us and is supporting on one knee a little hand organ; with one hand she is playing it, while with the other she blows the bellows. The other two on either side of her have censers in their hands and their figures bend right back as they swing them with vigorous joy. There is much less gold in this picture, but much more colour, for it is both deeper and brighter. It is as though Monaco had felt and taken a greater joy than Gaddi in the beautiful colouring he had seen in the world around him.

CHAPTER III

Tuscan School (*continued*)

THE beautiful picture, No. 663, "Christ in Glory," is the predella of the altar-piece painted for the church of San Domenico at Fiesole by the Dominican friar Angelico, who lived first at the Convent at Fiesole on the hills above Florence and afterwards in the Convent of San Marco in the city itself. His real name was Giovanni, but so holy and saintly was his life that he became known as Angelico and after his death the title of "Beato," only lower than that of saint, was bestowed upon him. It was said of Fra Angelico that he never took his paint brush in his hand without praying that it might be guided aright. He painted many pictures, but he loved best of all to show the glories of heaven, for his mind was always set on heavenly things, and in this long, narrow picture we have a very perfect specimen of his art. It is divided into several panels and represents Christ, His work on earth triumphantly completed, returning in glory to His seat at the right hand of God, and all the angels in heaven and all the saints on earth are there to greet Him.

In the middle panel Christ clothed in white, the banner of the Resurrection in His hand, rises against

a glowing golden background. He is surrounded by countless happy angels, "making melodious music." St. Michael, that heavenly warrior, stands on the right clad in blue armour, fashioned of angelic feathers, and his helmet and sword are in his hand.

The number and variety of musical instruments in this picture is remarkable. Mr. Hipkins tells us that in the left of the middle panel we may find the viol, rebec, clarion, trumpets, harp, zither, double flute, psaltery, tambourine, tabor, and a portable organ; and in the upper row on the left one of the large guitar-viols used by the troubadours. Beneath the figure of Christ in the middle are two angels playing on little organs. Fra Angelico must have been very fond of this instrument, as he so often represents angels, their backs turned to the spectators, intently playing them. Some of the angels are carrying the emblems of the Passion, the hammer, nails, and crown of thorns, now translated into symbols of triumph—and all this sweet and innocent throng is rejoicing: the angels have just heard the lovely news that Christ has come back again, and there is a rustle and a longing amongst the heavenly host as they come, half running, half flying to greet Him.

Fra Angelico could express light and sweetness, innocent love and joy in a way that has been given to no painter before or since.

Look at the background. As a matter of fact, it is the same gold background we have seen in so many pictures, but who could call it dull? It glows with a light as real as sunlight, but it is not in the least like sunlight, it is the light of Fra Angelico's child-like

imagination, for he gives us an atmosphere of his own, or rather, to put it more exactly, he gives us the atmosphere of the heaven that was as real to him as the earth is to us.

On either side of this picture of inmost heaven are ranged in close ranks patriarchs, prophets, saints, and martyrs; while the smallest and outermost panels are filled with saints of the Dominican Order, to which Fra Angelico himself belonged. In the top in the large panel on the right, we find many well-known figures: Noah with his ark, Moses and the tables of stone, with Aaron close beside him, Abraham carrying the sacrificial knife, and David with his harp, and many more. Below, amongst countless other saints, are Peter Martyr, St. Cosmo and St. Damian with their boxes of medicine, St. Augustine of Hippo holding a red heart, St. Theodore in blue armour, and St. Joseph with his budding staff in his hand; and in the lowest row is the beautiful figure of the Empress Helena holding the cross. Near the middle of the left panel is St. Jerome, wearing the dress of a cardinal and carrying a book in his hand. St. Jerome, of course, lived before cardinals were instituted, and the cardinalate was an honour conferred on him long after his death, in consideration of his great learning; near him are St. Nicholas with the three golden balls and St. Francis with the stigmata.

It is noticeable that nearly all the monastic saints represented in this picture belong to the Dominican Order, and that Fra Angelico is credited with a very human desire to establish the superiority of his own Order over that of the more popular Franciscans.

Two far-famed hermits are also to be found in the left panel, St. Onofrius, clad only in a girdle of vine leaves and his long grey hair, and the hermit Paul, the little kneeling figure clothed in green basket work. A very delightful legend, well known in the Middle Ages, centred about the hermit Paul.

When the holy hermit St. Anthony had come to the great age of ninety years, it was revealed to him that another hermit of equal sanctity, Paul by name, was living in a more distant part of the desert, and St. Anthony went forth from his cave determined to find and visit him. He journeyed long in the sandy wilderness, and for many days he saw no one of whom he might ask the way. At last he met a sad little satyr wandering far from his woodland haunts, and he humbly offered St. Anthony some fruit he had plucked from the palm trees, and when the holy man had accepted the gift the little satyr said, "I am the messenger of our company, and we, the creatures of the woods and streams, beseech thee, that thou wilt pray the Lord for us, for we know well that the Saviour of the world is come and His renown is spread through all the world." Then the holy hermit blessed him and the little satyr returned gladly to his fellows and his own home; but St. Anthony went on, deeper and deeper into the desert, till at last he met a she-wolf who guided him to the cave where dwelt the hermit Paul. Now when Paul saw a man approaching, he hastily went into his hut and shut fast the door; but St. Anthony had come very far, so he prayed Paul of his charity to open the door and let him in, "For," said he, "I know well I am not worthy to enter, but I

shall not depart from hence till I have seen and had speech with thee."

At last Paul opened the door and came forth dressed in a garment made of plaited palm leaves, like a mat. He greeted Anthony, and then the two hermits sat down by the side of a little stream that flowed past the mouth of the cave. And Paul, who had left the world years and years before, asked Anthony many questions concerning the state of the universe and the Christian faith. Hour after hour they sat, forgetful of time, till a raven flew down and placed before them a loaf; then Paul said to Anthony, "Be thou glad and joyful, my brother, for fifty years this raven has brought me half a loaf each day, and now, at thy coming, he has brought a whole loaf."

Then Paul asked Anthony to break the loaf and begin his meal, but he would not and rather pressed Paul to begin first; and such was the gentleness of their manners that neither would begin before the other, so at last both hermits laid hands on the loaf at the same time and it fell apart between them.

So refreshed, the two holy men talked all through the warm summer night, and at the dawn Paul said to Anthony, "It has been revealed to me that I am about to die and that thou, my brother, wilt bury me. Go now, therefore, and fetch the cloak that the holy Bishop Athanasius gave thee, that thou mayest wrap my body therein."

Anthony marvelled greatly at these words, for he had told no man of the gift of Athanasius, and he straightway departed to do the bidding of Paul. Some time after, having accomplished the toilsome

Christ in Glory (detail of left panel) *No 663*

FRA ANGELICO

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journey, he returned to Paul's cave, and there he found the holy man's dead body still kneeling in an attitude of prayer. Sadly he took from him his garment of plaited palm leaves and wrapped the body in the cloak he had brought, but when that was finished his strength was exhausted, for he was very old and feeble, and he knew not how he was to dig a grave in which to bury his friend. And while he sat sadly pondering, two lions came from the desert and dug a grave, and when he had put Paul's body within it the lions filled in the grave. Then, their task being finished, they returned to the place whence they had come, and Anthony went back to his home, carrying with him the coat of the hermit Paul.

Nothing in the Middle and early Renaissance Ages is more startling than its contrasts of saintliness and savagery. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced two of the world's greatest and most lovable saints, Francis of Assisi and Katherine of Siena, and also the "angelic painter" whose picture we have just been considering. The sinners were, however, to the full as energetic as the saints, and as a set-off to St. Francis and St. Katherine stand Ezzelino da Romano and Obizzo, the tyrant of Reggio. Dante in his journey through Hell met these two immersed to their brows in the River of Blood, where

> "Are the souls of the tyrants who were given
> To blood and rapine."

"Ezzelino made himself terrible not merely by executions and imprisonments, but also by mutilations and torments. When he captured Friola he caused

the population of all ages, sexes, and occupations to be deprived of their eyes, noses, and legs and to be cast forth to the mercy of the elements. On another occasion he walled up a family of princes in a castle and left them to die of famine."[1]

Obizzo, the tyrant of Reggio, caused his own mother to be drowned because she had been a washer-woman and her humble occupation annoyed him. Two hundred years later, in a sermon preached in his native city (about 1427), St. Bernardino of Siena gives an appalling picture of the bloodthirsty cruelty of his contemporaries.

The Mediæval Age was a time of excess, and compromise, so dear to the modern mind, seems to have had no attraction for it whatever. This love of black and white, with no intermediate grey, found its expression, too, in the mediæval idea of a future life. The saintly Fra Angelico paints the good safe in a beautiful paradise, seeing lovely sights and listening to the sweetest songs and music, while the wicked (close by) are being hooked and clawed out of their graves by hideous demons, only to be thrust down into a hell full of torments. And Thomas of Chantimpré says : " The sixth and last cause of joy [to the blessed spirits in heaven] will be to behold the damned on their left hand."[2]

In the present day this point of view, of course, strikes us as being very horrible, but to get any real idea of the age it is absolutely necessary to realize

[1] "The Renaissance in Italy. The Age of the Despots." J. A. Symonds.

[2] "A Mediæval Garner." G. C. Coulton.

both sides of the medal, the white and shining saintliness and the black vice and cruelty.

In No 1138, we have another fragment of an altarpiece, the "Crucifixion," by Andrea dal Castagno (about 1410–1457). It is extremely interesting because for the first time we get a real landscape, that is to say, a picture of the earth and sky seen together, through atmosphere. Added to that, it is a landscape that in its sadness and gloom reflects and accentuates the tragedy of the Crucifixion.

This small picture is part of a predella, and is considered by Mr. H. P. Horne to be one of the painter's earliest works.

Vasari tells us that Andrea lost both his parents when he was still very young, but an uncle befriended him and set him to mind his flocks and herds. One day, when he was thus employed, while sheltering from the rain he came on "one of those country painters who work at a small price who was painting the tabernacle of a peasant, a matter naturally of no great moment." Andrea was much interested and at once began to scratch and draw on walls and stones with charcoal and knife. His drawings showed the greatest talent, and these things came to the ears of a Florentine gentleman, Bernardetto de Medici, whose estates lay near by the farm. And when he saw the drawings he arranged that Andrea should become an apprentice to one of the painters then working in Florence.

This little legend, whether it be true or not (and it is perilously like the story told of Giotto's boyhood), is interesting because it again makes clear to us the way in which art entered into the life of the people.

Here we find a painter "of small price" who worked for peasants. There was no class labelled "artistic" in those days, and art did not exist solely for the rich and the educated, but everyone in their degree understood it, took an interest in and loved art; in consequence everything the people made was beautiful.

We have seen the strong intellectual bent shown by the Tuscan artists, but the first painter of this school to be overwhelmingly interested in the problems of perspective was the Florentine Paolo Uccello, 1397–1475.

Vasari tells us that he often sat up all night working out problems of perspective, and when his wife begged him to stop and go to bed he would reply, "Oh, what a delightful thing is this perspective!"

In No. 583, "The Battle of San Romano," we see in the figure of the fallen knight an example of Uccello's efforts at drawing a foreshortened object in perspective, and the hard work he accomplished in this branch of his art greatly helped the artists who came after him. This picture is one of three panels that were painted by command of Cosimo dei Medici to celebrate the defeat of the Sienese by the Florentines at the battle of San Romano in June, 1432. Cosimo had them painted to decorate his bedchamber, and of the two pictures that are wanted to complete the story of the battle one hangs in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, and the other in the Louvre in Paris.

The Florentines were under the command of Nicolò of Tolentino: he wished to effect a junction with Micheletto Attendoli of Cotignola, the captain of the Florentine army, and he therefore set off with

The Battle of San Romano *No. 583*

PAOLO UCCELLO

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only about twenty horsemen towards San Romano. Not far from there he found the Florentines were being hard pressed by the Sienese. Tolentino went to their rescue, but though he helped his countrymen he was not in sufficiently strong force to beat off the enemy, so he and his men retreated in the direction of San Romano. He sent a messenger to Cotignola begging for reinforcements, but while he was waiting for them he again engaged the enemy, and this time succeeded in routing them.

Paolo Uccello has represented the moment when Nicolò of Tolentino is leading the second attack against the Sienese, and the picture may be roughly divided into three parts.

First, in the distance is a hill up which two horsemen are violently spurring, no doubt they are going to the top to see if the reinforcements are coming. On a lower slope beneath a tree two men-at-arms are engaged in a furious struggle, while two spearmen on foot are rushing up to the rescue of their comrade, and yet another, clad in heavy armour, is toiling slowly behind: beside these there are three cross-bow men on the same slope, one has his bow over his shoulder, while two others are hastily winding theirs up.

The distant hill is divided from the battle that is going on in the foreground by a line of dark foliage. On the extreme right and left of the picture are orange trees, with their glowing fruit shining among their dark leaves, and from one to the other stretches a hedge of pink and white roses. Just in the middle, behind the knight who wears the coat of arms, it dips down, giving the impression that it is possible to get

through it and so on to the hill; in this way it forms a link instead of a barrier between the foreground and the distance.

The third division is the battle scene, where the knights are so valiantly laying on to their foes, or rather foe, for only one solitary Sienese knight is to be seen, in the right-hand corner of the picture: mounted on a white horse he is fighting against such tremendous odds that we cannot but hope that he will "live to fight another day." Doubtless he represents a whole host of knights outside the picture, for Uccello clearly wants it to be understood that this has been no easy victory for the Florentines, for helmets and shields and broken lances lie upon the ground, and one man at least has been killed.

The man riding the white horse in the middle of the picture is Nicolò of Tolentino, the leader of the Florentines, and with his marshal's wand he is directing the attack on the Sienese. He and his young armour-bearer, who rides close behind him, are the only two in the whole company who do not wear helmets. The painter wished to paint their portraits, hence it was necessary that their faces should be uncovered. Nicolò himself has a large brocaded cap upon his head, while his bascinet (a kind of helmet) is being carried by his armour-bearer. The bascinet is encircled by a little coronet, the steel part being covered with rich embroidery. Above the head of Tolentino waves his white standard powdered over with his impresa or device, a curious and intricate knot. Behind the knights, on the extreme left, are the trumpeters, with plain steel caps on their heads, blowing their long

trumpets, and beyond them again are the spearmen, whose tall lances stretch up to the top of the picture, lines of colour against the dark foliage of the orange trees.

Each knight wears a different crest upon his helmet, the reason of this being that when the vizor was closed the face was concealed, consequently without some sign it was impossible in battle to tell friend from foe.

The "Christ in Glory," as we have seen, was painted by a Dominican friar, and we now come to a picture, No. 666, "The Annunciation," by a Carmelite friar, Filippo Lippi (about 1406–1469), who was by no means of the same saintly disposition as Fra Angelico. It will be of interest here to define the difference between the monks and the friars.

From the great Order of the Benedictines sprang various other Orders, but their statutes were all founded on the Benedictine rules. The monks were expected to withdraw from the world and were vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience and to manual labour, which included writing and copying their valuable MSS.

The monks lived in community in a convent under the rule of an abbot; by degrees, however, the monastic orders grew very worldly and careless. The monasteries were no longer little settlements set in a wilderness where man struggled to subdue nature. The struggle was long past and the humble huts of the founders had become magnificent buildings spreading over acres of ground, and containing within their precincts, cloisters and garths, gardens and fishponds,

a large church, and accommodation for guests from the king in his royal progress to the miserable beggar wandering from place to place.

The monks lived a life apart from the people, who were under the care of their parish priests, and did they need other help were expected to come to the convent to seek it, the monks did not go to them. The huge abbey churches were looked on as the exclusive property of the monks, and laymen were only allowed to hear the services from one particular part of the church, which was specially set aside for them.

In 1210 St. Francis of Assisi founded his Order of mendicant friars or brothers; they too were vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, but their vows did not include manual labour. St. Francis laid especial stress on poverty, and the friars were forbidden to have houses or money of their own, and were sent forth in pairs, barefooted, to wander through the world preaching to the people and begging for food and shelter as they went.

They were, above all things, to mix with the people: the ideal of St. Benedict was to withdraw from the world and lead a life of holiness apart; but the ideal of St. Francis was to go into the world and lead a life of holiness in its midst. Under the direct inspiration of their founder, the Franciscans at first accomplished a great work, but riches and popularity were fast heaped upon them, and they soon fell away from their first fervour. By various subterfuges they managed to get round their vow that they could hold no property, and soon their rich friaries and beautiful churches rose all over Europe. Almost at the same

time that St. Francis founded his Order of the Franciscans, St. Dominic founded his of the Dominicans. He was a stern and unbending man who loyally served the orthodox Church and hated heresy, and his followers were from the first better educated than the Franciscans (for St. Francis distrusted all earthly learning) to the end that by their preaching and teaching they might combat all heresy and schism. The Dominicans were the cultured and learned Order of friars.

All the preaching Orders were vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience; St. Francis in addition gave a very strict and unbending rule to his Order, while that of St. Dominic was far more elastic. In consequence of this rigidity, in a few years from the death of their founder, the Franciscans had many different interpretations of their rule, and as many different factions and divisions in their Order; while the Dominicans, owing to the adaptability of their rule, have been vexed by no such dissensions.

The only other preaching Order was that of the Carmelites. It was very small compared to the other two and was founded by the hermits who lived on Mount Carmel, and their rule was confirmed by Pope Honorius III. Fra Filippo Lippi belonged to the Order of the Carmelites, and his picture of "The Annunciation," No. 666, was painted by him for Cosimo dei Medici.

The Virgin is sitting in a little porch and behind her is her big bed covered with a dark coverlet embroidered with gold; at the side of the head of the bed is a little passage with steps leading to the upper part

of the house. Just above the stairs is a hand surrounded by clouds, and from the hand fall a number of softly coloured rings of light, something like soap bubbles; and in the last one is a dove whose white form is reflected in the bubbles through which he has flown. The cloth of gold that drapes the Virgin's chair is of extraordinary richness, looked at closely, a pattern can be seen worked under the shining gold; the angel's wings are of peacock's feathers and his shoulders are clothed with plumes of russet and gold.

In that little garden, where the angel kneels, it is impossible, for all they look so pretty, to make out what kind of flowers grow on the lawn, they are not portraits of real flowers, but of imaginary ones, painted by Filippo "out of his own head." Compare the way in which he has painted the garden and the way he has painted the drapery hanging over the Virgin's chair and it is easy to see that he did not trouble to look very closely at the flowers, but he looked at the drapery again and again and copied it very carefully indeed.

That this picture was painted for Cosimo dei Medici is clear, because at the end of the wall on which the bowl of lilies stands is his impresa or badge of three feathers tied together in a ring.

Vasari, the historian of the painters, tells us that Cosimo, knowing that Lippi was inclined to be lazy, used to lock him up in a room alone with his picture, hoping by this means to force him to work harder. This naturally made the painter very angry, and one night he broke out of the palace, for he said very truly that "men of genius were not beasts of burden but

forms of light," and from that time forward Cosimo gave the artist more liberty.

Another work by Filippo Lippi is No. 248, "The Vision of St. Bernard."

This picture is identified with one mentioned by Vasari as having been painted to fit a space over a door in the Palazzo della Signoria at Florence. One day when St. Bernard was writing in his cell, the Virgin, surrounded by a company of angels, came and spoke words of encouragement to him.

In this picture we have no rich bright colours, it is painted in dull soft shades, but Filippo Lippi must have enjoyed painting it very much, for he has thrown himself so thoroughly into the scene, notwithstanding the fact that he has been much hampered in the composition by being tied to a particular size and shape. St. Bernard, who has been sitting working hard at his writing, suddenly looks up and there, to his surprise, is the angelic vision; the painter makes us see and feel the quiet cell and the amazement and delight of the saint.

No. 667, "St. John the Baptist and Six other Saints," is a great contrast to the "Vision of St. Bernard," and beautiful as it is Lippi seems to have taken much less interest in the subject. The saints, all very neatly and beautifully dressed, sit on a marble bench in a garden and look as though they were holding a meeting. The little landscape behind them has all the beauty of twilight, and so well are the colours blended that we scarcely notice the strange fact that it is apparently broad daylight in the saint's garden! The dark foliage in front of the marble platform belongs to the same

family of plants as those in Lippi's picture of the Annunciation.

In the middle sits St. John the Baptist, his cross in his hand, and then beginning at the extreme left is St. Francis, who is known by his stigmata; next to him is St. Lawrence, the deacon, with his gridiron; then comes St. Cosmo, while on the other side of the Baptist is Cosmo's brother St. Damian. They have both put their little boxes of medicine (for they were doctors) behind them on the marble ledge. Next to St. Damian sits St. Anthony with his crutch in his hand, while the last, on the right, is St. Peter Martyr: he was killed by a knife cut on the head, so he is always represented with a big knife fixed in his crown.

St. Lawrence lived in the reign of the Emperor Decius, who from being a simple knight had risen, by reason of his strength and cunning, to be head of the Roman army, and after a successful campaign he treacherously slew his master the Emperor and had himself proclaimed emperor in his stead.

Philip, the son of the murdered man (who is supposed to have been a Christian) fled, but he was pursued and killed by the partisans of Decius; but before Philip left Rome he gave all his treasures to Pope Sixtus. Decius sought for the treasure, and when he discovered it was in the keeping of the Pope he sent for the old man and commanded him to give it up. Sixtus, however, refused to disclose its whereabouts, and the Emperor ordered that he should at once be cast into prison. But before he was taken Sixtus had confided the treasure to the care of Lawrence, the

deacon, and told him to distribute it among the poor people in Rome ; and this he did.

As Sixtus was about to be led away Lawrence ran after him, crying :

" My father, why do you leave me behind ? Let me go to prison with you ; prove me and see if in me you have a worthy soldier of Christ."

Sixtus looked kindly on the young man, but he answered :

" My son, you will endure greater struggles and fiercer strife for the faith than I, for I, as an old man, have taken the lighter part ; but to you, a young one, remains a more glorious battle in which you shall triumph over the tyrant."

Under examination, Sixtus refused to say what had become of the treasure, so Decius ordered him at once to be beheaded. And Lawrence, when he saw the old man dragged to the place of execution, cried out :

" Holy father, I have done with the treasure even as you have commanded."

When the soldiers guarding Sixtus heard mention of the treasure they immediately took Lawrence prisoner, and when they had beheaded the Pope they brought the young man before Decius. Then said the Emperor :

" Lawrence, where is that treasure ? I know it is in your keeping."

To this Lawrence answered :

" Give me three days, O Emperor, and I will show it to you."

And in those three days Lawrence gathered together

all the poor people on whom he had bestowed the treasure, and on the third day he led them before the Emperor and said :

" Lo, Decius, behold what you seek ! The hands of these poor men have borne the treasure to heaven."

Then was the Emperor very angry and he commanded that Lawrence should be beaten with a scourge tipped with lead, and when this was ended he commanded Lawrence to worship his idols.

" I swear by all my gods and goddesses," said he, " you shall sacrifice to them or you shall endure this night a torment more horrible than any man has suffered before."

But Lawrence only answered :

" I will not sacrifice to your gods. My night has no darkness, but all things shine in my sight."

Decius called to his servants :

" Bring here a bed of iron and let this obstinate fellow be stretched upon it, there shall he spend the hours of darkness which he says are shining moments to him."

Lawrence's garments were taken from him and he was laid on a huge gridiron, and live coals were put beneath it.

When he was already more dead than alive they spoke to him again, but Lawrence, his courage undiminished, only said :

" One side is roasted, O Emperor ; now turn me on the other." And they did so, and he died.

St. Cosmo and St. Damian were two brothers, Arabians who lived in the city of Aegae in Cilicia. Their mother was a good and holy woman and she

taught them the Christian faith. When they grew up St. Cosmo and St. Damian became doctors (the Arabians were famed for their learned physicians), and soon they were celebrated for their skill in all the land. Before they healed a sick person they invariably besought God to help them in their good work, but when their prayers were answered and their patient had recovered they took no reward or fee, no matter how rich or honourable the sick person might be.

Now the Governor Lysias heard of their renown and he sent for them and commanded them to fall down and worship the gods of the heathen, but they would not. Then, after very many pains and tortures Lysias ordered that St. Cosmo and St. Damian should be beheaded. This was done, and they laid down their lives in the reign of Diocletian, Emperor of Rome.

St. Anthony, the Hermit of the Desert, was born in Egypt, of a good and religious father and mother; when he was twenty years old he heard the priest read in church: "Everyone that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

This saying disturbed St. Anthony very much, for it came to him as a message, telling him to leave his home and all he loved. While he still thought on this thing he came upon the words, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Then he hesitated no longer, but gave up all he had and went on foot into the desert, and there joined a company of hermits who lived in caves in the rocks.

And while he was there he studied the lives of his companions, seeking to copy the virtues of each: the humility of one, the justice of another, the charity of a third, till he himself became the most holy of them all. The devils and demons marked this, and they tormented him greatly, but for a long time, whether they attacked him together or singly, he was able to put them to flight. At last, however, the demons came in huge numbers, and rushed upon him while he was in a cavern alone, and beat him and tore him and left him for dead upon the ground: there he was found by the hermits, who, weeping and lamenting, lifted him up, and were about to bury him when suddenly the saint opened his eyes and commanded them to desist. He told his companions of what had happened, and he entreated them at once to carry him back to the cavern where the demons had attacked him, for he was determined, he said, to conquer them by prayer and faith. The terrified hermits did as he desired, and again he was left alone in the dark cave, where, after a terrible struggle, he vanquished the demons. St. Anthony's life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness, but at last he died in peace at the age of one hundred and five.

We come next to a winged picture by a very rare master, No. 586, "Virgin and Child enthroned, with Saints," by Zenobio Machiavelli (1418–1479).

It is full of charm; the crowd of little angels behind the Virgin have a child-like grace and character all their own. One or two are talking together in quiet voices, no doubt about Christ and His mother, or some such heavenly subject. Two angels who are old enough

to know how to make music, sit in front on the steps of the throne, playing on a mandoline and lute.

In the left wing we have St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and St. Nicholas of Tolentino ; in the right are St. Bartholomew, with his flayer's knife, and St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine.

It is perhaps worth while to compare this picture with that of the same subject by Benozzo Gozzoli, No. 283, " Virgin and Child Enthroned " : the arrangement is much the same, but how different the feeling. Benozzo's is a fine picture, but it is a picture of the world. The figures are richly and beautifully dressed, it is a splendid piece of colour, but it savours more of the things of earth than of the things of heaven. Macchiavelli's is far less rich and magnificent, the whole thing is flatter, but how full of grace and delicate charm it is.

The picture is like a wild woodland flower that gives up its faint sweet scent only to those who love it well enough to stoop and come near to it.

As in the altar-piece by Landini it is possible to guess, from the saints represented, that it was painted for one of the Benedictine Order, so it may be concluded that Macchiavelli painted this one for someone of the Order of St. Augustine, for out of the four saints, three belong to it. First we have the founder, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and next to him is the second saint of the Order, St. Nicholas of Tolentino, and on the other side, standing by St. Bartholomew, is St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, and the first nun of the Order.

The stories of St. Augustine and his mother Monica

were well known in the Middle Ages, and so no doubt was that of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, but of the latter saint but few facts have come down to us. He was born near Fermo about the year 1239, and passed the greater part of his life at Tolentino, from whence he takes his name. His parents in his infancy dedicated him to the service of God, and when he was still quite young he became an Augustinian canon. He lived a life of the greatest austerity, charity, and devotion, preaching continually, and urging his countrymen to repentance. It is related that never in the whole course of his life did he eat any meat, but when he lay dying, the canons, to maintain his strength, brought him a dish of stewed pigeons; the saint was so weak that they hoped he would not notice of what it was composed. But St. Nicholas, though he scarcely had strength to move, knew at once what was set before him, and he reproved his friends for the little deception they had practised: painfully he raised his hands above the dish, and blessing the pigeons, bade them fly away, which they did very happily.

St. Augustine was born in Africa in the year 354.

His father was a pagan, but his mother Monica was a most devout Christian.

Augustine, in his youth, had brilliant prospects before him: he was well versed in the learning of the ancients, and was the centre of all that was gay and worldly in his native city of Carthage, but he was anything but a saint, and he caused his mother to shed many bitter tears, for he would not give up his dissipated life, nor, like his father, would he turn to the true Faith. At last, in despair, Monica went to her

friend, the Bishop of Carthage, to beg that he would pray for the soul of her son, and so long and earnestly did she plead, that the good Bishop, seeing her grief, comforted her, saying, "Go thy way, for a son of so many tears may not by any possibility perish." Notwithstanding, Augustine did not change his manner of life, and he now left his native town and went to Rome. The fame of his learning had gone before him and he was soon known all over the city as a great teacher of rhetoric. But though he was admired by all and successful in everything he did, yet he was ever restless and dissatisfied and had no peace in his soul. After a while he left Rome and went to Milan, where the great St. Ambrose was then Bishop.

They became friends, and after much pain and sorrow Augustine became a Christian, and in the thirtieth year of his age, on Easter Day, he was baptized by St. Ambrose in the Cathedral of Milan. And it is said that one of the grandest of our religious poems, the Te Deum, was composed that day by these two great men as they went up the church towards the altar. St. Ambrose began, "Te deum laudamus," and St. Augustine answered, "Te dominum Confitemur," and so they sang in alternate verses to the end. The joy of St. Monica, who saw the answer to her prayer, was too deep for words. From the time of his baptism St. Augustine never faltered nor looked back. He gave up all, and became Bishop of Hippo, a small town in Africa. There he spent the rest of his days labouring among his people and writing books for the instruction of those who should come after him. While he was writing his "Discourses," it chanced that he was wander-

ing alone by the seashore, and as he went he meditated long and deeply on sacred matters, and in especial on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. And we are told by the monk who wrote the story of St. Augustine that "he found by the seaside a little child which had made a little pit in the sand, and in his hand a little spoon. And with the spoon he took out water of the large sea and poured it into the pit. And when St. Augustine beheld him he marvelled and demanded what he did. And he answered and said: 'I will lade out and bring all this water of the sea into this pit.'

"'What?' said he [St. Augustine], 'it is impossible. How may it be done, sith the sea is so great and large, and thy pit and spoon so little?' 'Yes, forsooth,' said he [the child], 'I shall lightlier and sooner draw all the water of the sea and bring it into this pit, than thou shalt bring the mystery of the Trinity and his Divinity into thy little understanding . . . for the mystery of the Trinity is greater and larger to the comparison of thy wit and brain, than is this great sea unto this little pit.' And therewith the child vanished away."

Two of St. Augustine's books, his "Confessions" and "Concerning the City of God," are much read to the present day.

When St. Augustine was near the end of his long life, great trouble came to him and his people of Hippo. The savage Vandals overran the country round about and spared neither man, woman, nor child, and laid siege to the city of Hippo, and again, in the words of his chronicler, "under that tribulation Augustine before all other led a bitter and right holy life, for the tears of his eyes were to him bread day and night

when he saw some slain, others chased away, the churches without priests, and the city wasted."

Full of years and sorrows, the old man prayed that he might die, and his prayer was answered, for during the siege of Hippo he departed this life in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

St. Augustine was looked on as the head of the Augustinian Order, though it was not founded till long after his death, and his mother St. Monica is counted as the first nun.

The St. Augustine to whom we greatly owe the conversion of England was a Roman, and lived long after St. Augustine of Hippo.

The early painters had one orthodox way of representing the Trinity, and Francesco Pesellino (1422–1457), while keeping strictly to the conventional rendering of the subject, has painted a very beautiful picture, No. 727, "The Trinity." God the Father is represented as an old man with a fine and dignified face, God the Holy Ghost as the dove, and God the Son as Christ on the cross, and the three subjects are very beautifully grouped together to form a perfect whole. The feet of God the Father rest on flat clouds, and round Him are little cherubs, alternately red and blue. He supports the arms of the crucifix with both hands, and the dove hovers above the head of the cross. The whole composition is set against a quiet evening sky, the landscape beneath is a valley, with hills on either side; it is very like the country that lies between Florence and Bologna, as indeed it may well be, for Pesellino was a Florentine. The cross stands on a little hillock covered with indefinite flowers. This picture,

Mr. Roger Fry tells us, is only the centre part of a large altar-piece painted for the Company of the Trinity at Pistoja. Originally there were two saints standing on either side, and the figures of two flying angels fitted in above the arms of the cross. The panel on the left, representing St. James the Greater and St. Mammas, is in the King's collection, but the corresponding panel on the right, representing St. Zeno and St. Jerome, is lost. The two smaller panels with the angels are on loan in the National Gallery. In an old record we are told that the Company of the Trinity of Pistoja determined to have an altar-piece for their chapel. For the subject they decided to have a representation of the Trinity, with four saints : St. James the Greater was chosen first because he was a patron of the country, and after him they selected St. Zeno because he was the patron of the clergy of Pistoja, and the third saint was to be St. Jerome. But for a long time they could not decide on the merits of the fourth, till at last Pero Ser Landi, the priest, "begged that the Company would agree that the glorious martyr St. Mommé (Mammas) should be painted because of the devotion he had to him." Pero Ser Landi also said he was willing to celebrate mass on St. Mommé's feast day in the chapel of the Company and also in his will "to leave for the said feast day six omine of wheat for ever."

And the priest got his way. St. Mommé was chosen as the fourth saint, and the picture was ordered, and "from September, 1456, to July, 1457, Pero Ser Landi was constantly visiting Florence to supervise the picture, always at the expense of the Company. As a

rule he appears to have gone once a month, at a cost of horses and hotels of about 3 libbri."[1]

Unfortunately Pesellino died before the picture was finished, at the early age of thirty-six, and it was finished by Filippo Lippi, who appears to have been paid by the Company of the Trinity partly in corn.

[1] Article by Roger Fry, Burlington Magazine, Vol. XVI.

CHAPTER IV

Tuscan School (*continued*)

IN the work of the painter Sandro Botticelli (1444–1510) the effects of the revival of classical art and learning, known as the Renaissance, are brought clearly before our eyes. It must be remembered that Italy was by natural descent the land most in touch with the ancient learning. The northern art, the Gothic, was never a native of her soil: it was brought in by foreign invasions and never showed the spontaneous growth or vigour which marked its course in other lands. By the end of the fourteenth century its impetus was practically exhausted in Italy, though it remained in full vigour for a century or more elsewhere. And though a certain knowledge of, and admiration for, classical art existed throughout the Middle Ages even in the most Gothically minded lands, it was only in Italy that any definite attempt at a revival of that art took place before the fifteenth century. Niccolò Pisano, making the pulpit for the Cathedral of Siena late in the thirteenth century, deliberately took the sculptures of a late Roman sarcophagus as his model, and although instances of this kind of borrowing were comparatively rare, it showed clearly enough to what sources of inspiration it was natural for an Italian to turn.

By degrees the greatest curiosity and enthusiasm were

aroused among the learned, and it became the fashion for wealthy persons to employ agents to go through Italy and Greece to search for relics of the Ancients, and very rich were the spoils they brought back. Kings and queens, princes and princesses, vied with one another for the largest and most complete collection of antiquities, and by the time the fifteenth century had come, Latin and Greek were considered the only languages worth learning, and later on, in the sixteenth century, Cardinal Bembo, a prince of the Church, refused to read the epistles of St. Paul because the Apostle wrote inferior Greek, and the Cardinal feared to spoil his own pure style! The stories of classical mythology became so popular that the love stories of the gods and goddesses appeared in all sorts of unexpected places: in the church of St. Maria del Popolo in Rome pictures of these subjects painted by Raphael for Agostino Chigi the banker may still be seen.

It must be remembered that the classical influence was not confined to literature, painting, and sculpture alone, it pervaded everything, it was in the very air the people breathed. Their eyes were turned backward towards the past and their one idea was to paint, carve, build, write, and live as like the Greeks and Romans as possible; only because they were so original, so virile in every way themselves, they brought to life not a copy but a new style of their own, and this we call the Renaissance. Perhaps the only influence comparable to it in modern times was the great upheaval and shifting of ideals and thought brought about by the introduction of machinery in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The most poetic of the painters of the early Renaissance is Sandro Botticelli (1444–1510). He painted many pictures of the gods, but anything more unlike the spirit of classical art it is impossible to imagine. The great Greek sculptors delighted in the beauty of the human body, they represented heroic men and women untouched by care or sorrow, but over all that Botticelli touches is a brooding melancholy; saints and madonnas, gods and goddesses all alike have known sorrow and suffering. We see this in the picture of "Mars and Venus," No. 915.

The figure of the god of war is worn and thin, and his face has an almost painful look of exhaustion: Venus is a beautiful, mysterious-looking woman, very unlike the thoughtless, charming goddess of Love; they are in a strangely beautiful glade that opens on to a wide green meadow. Were it not for the little satyrs the picture would be deeply melancholy, but they are so fresh and gay that it would be impossible to remain gloomy in their company. One has put on Mars' helmet hind side before and is grasping the heavy lance with both his small arms, his merry companion helping him. The third satyr is blowing a conch shell into the god's ear, who is certainly sleeping soundly, and the fourth has crept inside the armour that he has laid aside.

In the next picture Botticelli leaves the mythology of Greece and paints the "Adoration," No. 592.

The Virgin is very sweet and gentle, and the little Child on her lap bends towards the old man who kneels before Him and is about to kiss the tiny foot he holds in his hand: childhood, womanhood, and old age could

not be more graciously represented than they are here, and these figures are set in the midst of ruined buildings. In front of this small company, we have the other two wise men and then their friends and companions, grand noblemen dressed in gorgeous garments who have travelled with them from the East, and behind come their mounted retainers, crowds and crowds of them. Just at the end of the procession two have come to blows; they are doubtless fighting for the best view, for those at the back certainly could not have seen much.

Behind the kneeling wise man stands a richly dressed youth, his hand raised and pointing to the star that has so miraculously led them, while another man on horseback is also looking at it. A little dwarf stands in the foreground; he is very grandly dressed and carries a drawn sword in his hand which must belong to one of the magi, for another hangs in its scabbard at his side.

In Botticelli's day it was the custom for princes to keep about their persons dwarfs and jesters, and when they could get them black men and rare animals as well, and these they kept for curiosity and amusement.

But Botticelli is determined that these grand people shall not be alone in seeing this lovely sight. The two poor shepherds who are hurrying in, on the right, are as near the Virgin and her Son as are the wise men. One of the shepherds carries a bagpipe tied with ribbons, while the other has a very long horn, just like the big horns the Swiss shepherds still use.

This wonderful picture shows a glowing richness of colouring and an extraordinary vigour of composition; each figure has its own character, yet all

are dominated by one feeling, the wish to see and join in the homage to the little Child on His mother's knee.

Only a part of No. 275, "The Virgin and Child, with St. John the Baptist and attendant Angel," is considered to be by Botticelli. John the Baptist and the angel are generally supposed to have been painted by one of his pupils, probably Giuliano di San Gallo.

The face of the Virgin is extraordinarily beautiful. She is very young and fair, but what power to suffer lies in her sad eyes. She stands there the emblem for all time of woman suffering through her child.

Botticelli in his youth was as enthusiastic in his admiration of the works of the Ancients as any of his brother artists, but towards the end of his life he came under the influence of the Dominican friar Savonarola, who, horrified by the luxury and wickedness which he saw around him, preached repentance and an immediate return to a simpler purer life. Under his direction a number of artists, Botticelli among them, joined themselves to the Piagnoni, and determined to paint pictures that would help to keep alive the spirit of Christianity, and the picture of the "Nativity," No. 1034, was painted for this purpose in the year 1500, after Savonarola and his two companions had been burned to death in the Place of the Signory in Florence. At the top of the picture is an inscription written in Greek, giving the date and referring to certain passages in Revelation.

And now let us look at the picture, remembering that no reproduction however good can give more than a faint conception of its ideal beauty.

M.S.

The Nativity *No. 1034*

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

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In the foreground paths run through rocks covered with verdure to a little arched cave that has been built up and roofed, to form a rough stable for an ox and an ass, and behind the cave is a small pine wood. It is the evening time and the sun is striking level across the slender stems of the trees.

Beneath the pentise roof the Virgin kneels in worshipful joy before her Son, who lies upon a white cloth His mother has spread for Him. He holds out His arms to her, kicking and crowing, a true Son of Man. Joseph sits behind the Child, his head hidden in his arms, and the ox and the ass stand near by. Up above on the roof, three angels sit, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

Close to the rude tree-trunk that supports the pentise roof, kneel three richly dressed men, with wreaths upon their heads, and the angel beside them points to the holy Child. On the other side are two poor shepherds who also wear green garlands. They too are in charge of an angel, and the little angel is so afraid lest they should look the wrong way that she has put her arm round the shepherd's neck, and is gently turning his head in the right direction.

Quite in the foreground three angels are embracing three men who are generally supposed to represent Savonarola and the two companions who suffered death with him. Near them, ugly small demons are breaking their spears, while others are trying to escape and squeeze themselves into the rifts and cracks of the rocks, overcome by the spirits of peace and love.

Beyond and above the pine wood the soft evening

sky has opened, and through the great chasm pours the golden light of heaven and in the light a celestial company is dancing in ecstasy.

In passionate joy and adoration they have taken off their crowns and have fastened them to the ends of the branches they bear in their hands, and the golden crowns swing back and forwards keeping rhythmic time to their dance and song.

In this picture Botticelli has painted the idea of heaven and earth united: he has done in art what Bunyan did in literature when he wrote the wonderful description of Christian's entrance into the Celestial City. By the magic of their colour and words they make us see and feel something that is not of earth, though it is stated in material forms.

Another "Adoration of the Magi" by Botticelli is the round picture, No. 1033. It is crowded with figures and the upper part is filled by the ruins of a great building standing against a quiet sky. The architecture belongs to the Renaissance period, for the form and shape of the pillars are like those built by the Romans. In the midst of these ruins a wooden roof has been fixed, and beneath it in the middle of the picture sits the Virgin with her Son upon her knee. Before her are the wise men doing homage, two are kneeling, one having laid his crown on the ground, while the third is removing his before he too kneels. This central group is surrounded in a half-circle by a gay throng of richly dressed persons who are looking on. Only behind the Virgin do we see two groups of humbler folk. On the left are two poor men who have climbed over the ruins to see what is going on, and on

the right is a big wooden saddle, and by it two shepherds playing on their pipes.

Behind the gorgeous peacock that stands on the broken pillar on the right is a landscape and a distant city towards which, on a white road, two riders are spurring. Below them is an immense broken arch, through which is seen a wooded park where some deer are rushing away in fear : perhaps they have caught sight of the unwonted crowd in the old ruins, or perhaps they have heard the horsemen galloping by. There are two little monkeys in this picture, one is on the right near a boy in blue, and the other in the foreground on the left. The white horse with the huge hind quarters in the foreground must be waiting for his master, one of the wise men, to finish his homage.

Nothing in these pictures is more noticeable than the universal love of music. We find every kind of instrument represented, from the lute, that most expensive of early Renaissance instruments, down to the shepherd's humble pipe. We certainly never see shepherds and cowherds playing on pipes and horns in the fields now, but in the old pictures they are constantly doing so. Clearly they had many more musical instruments than we have ; from the appearance of some of them one is inclined to think that anything that would make a noise came into the category. The love of music was clearly far more general and it was looked on as a useful as well as a beautiful thing.[1] When people went on pilgrimages or long journeys they always took their musical instruments with them, because, as an old chronicler tells us, " when one of them that goeth bare-

[1] " Little History of Music." Annette Hullah.

fote striketh his toe upon a stone and hurteth him sore and maketh him to blede, it is well done that he and his fellows begin then a song or else take out of his bosome a bagpipe for to drive away with myrth the hurte."

We now come to a painter (a pupil of Botticelli's) who looked at flowers and loved them, for in No. 1412, "The Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist," he has painted a most beautiful bowl of white briar roses and jasmine. It is a delightful little picture, for the Virgin is kind and motherly, and the children are child-like. The little St. John's cross is only a long bamboo stick, slit at the top to allow of a short bit being thrust through: it is just the sort of cross any small child would make and carry. The little Christ holds a pomegranate in His hand, the emblem of hope in immortality.

A picture painted by two brothers, Antonio (1432–1498) and Piero Pollajuolo (1443–1496), is No. 292, "The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian." Piero was brought up as a painter, but Antonio was a goldsmith and sculptor and did not begin to paint till he was forty years old, it is said. This "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian" was greatly admired from early times, for in Vasari's "Lives of the Painters" this passage occurs:—

"For the chapel of the Pucci in the Church of San Sebastian of the Servites in Florence Antonio painted an altar-piece, a remarkable and admirably executed work with numerous horses, many undraped figures, and singularly beautiful foreshortenings. This picture likewise contains the portrait of St. Sebastian himself, taken from the life—from the face of Gino di

The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian *No. 292*

ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAJUOLO

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Ludovico Capponi, that is—the painting has been more extolled than any other ever executed by Antonio. He has evidently copied nature in this work to the utmost of his power, as we perceive more particularly in one of the archers who, bending towards the earth, and resting his weapon against his breast, is employing all the force of a strong arm to prepare it for action : the veins are swelling, the muscles strained, and the man holds his breath as he applies all his strength to the effort. Nor is this the only figure executed with care ; all the others are likewise well done, and in the diversity of their attitudes give clear proof of the artist's ability and of the labour bestowed by him on his work : all which was fully acknowledged by Antonio Pucci, who gave him three hundred scudi for the picture, declaring at the same time that he was barely paying him for the colours."

It is noticeable that Vasari says the picture was painted by Antonio, and makes no mention of Piero, but later critics clearly trace in it the work of both brothers.

On a little hill St. Sebastian is tied to the stump of a tree : he is being shot at by six archers, three of whom are using the old form of bow, while three more are shooting with the crossbow : the latter was wound up with a string which was then suddenly loosed, and an arrow shot from it flew further and more strongly than one sent from the old-shaped bow. Below the hillock is a plain with a triumphal arch on the left. Several knights in armour are exercising their horses on the level ground, and beyond them is a landscape of great beauty through which a river winds onward to

the distant hills and seems to carry us quite out and beyond the picture, and leaves us wondering what country lies beyond those soft grey mountains.

The exquisite little picture "Apollo and Daphne," No. 928, is by Antonio Pollajuolo alone, and is full of the richest yet most subdued colouring. Daphne, at the moment of capture, is turning into a tree, already her hands and arms are branching laurels. The figure of Apollo is extraordinarily beautiful, he is an ardent lover, full of glowing passion.

> "Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
> Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve;
> She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
> For ever wilt thou love and she be fair."

Daphne was the daughter of the river god Peneus and she was very young and very fair. One day, as she was wandering through the forest listening to the birds singing in the trees, Apollo the sun god, looking through the leafy branches saw her, and no sooner did he look upon her than he loved her. He came near her, treading softly on the shady, sun-flecked grass, but with all his care he stepped on a fallen branch that broke beneath his foot. Startled by the sound, the maiden turned, and seeing the stranger so near her was frightened, and light and fleet of foot away she sped. In vain did Apollo pursue her, beseeching her to stop, he only frightened her the more. On and on with flying steps she went, and Apollo followed after. But though the maiden ran so swiftly, the god gained steadily upon her. Breathless and trembling Daphne reached the river's brink, the home of her father, the river god, and feeling Apollo close behind her she cried

aloud to Peneus to save her; he heard her prayer, and as Apollo was about to clasp her in his arms, Peneus changed his daughter into a laurel tree.

From that time forward Apollo loved the tree, and he decreed that the triumphal crowns given to poets and victorious athletes should be made of laurel leaves.

In the last chapter we looked at the pictures painted by Fra Filippo Lippi, and we now come to No. 293, "The Virgin and Child with St. Jerome and St Dominic," by his son, Filippino Lippi (1457–1504).

Filippo Lippi was a good painter but a bad friar. He carried off a beautiful nun, Lucrezia Buti, from the Convent of Santa Margherita, and after a considerable scandal the Pope released them from their vows and they were married. Filippino Lippi was Lucrezia's son. It is well in looking at this picture to go to the other end of the gallery and see it first from a distance, and then to go nearer and examine it in detail.

The Virgin and Child are in the middle of the picture, and on one side is St. Jerome and on the other St. Dominic. These figures are set in a very beautiful landscape that dips down into blue distance just behind the Virgin's head, and her golden halo looks like the setting sun as it sinks behind the horizon. The big tree on the left is very carefully painted and breaks up the light sky very beautifully.

The Virgin sits nursing her little Child on her knee, her face is pale and sad, as though already she felt the sorrow and suffering that is to come upon her Son. To the left kneels St. Jerome: with the big stone in his hand he has been striking himself in penitence

and humiliation. On the right is St. Dominic, holding a lily in one hand and a book in the other, which he is reading, and indeed he seems to be taking very little heed of the rest of the company. St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, was a great enemy of all heretics, and he wrote a book to refute their arguments. On one occasion he was preaching from it to a crowd of unbelievers, but he quite failed to convince them of their errors. St. Dominic was so annoyed by their stupidity and obstinacy that he flung his book in the fire. When, however, the heretics saw the book leap out of the fire three times, untouched by the flames, a number who were unmoved by his spoken word were convinced by this miracle of the wisdom of his point of view. This may be the book that he is reading so intently. The inkhorn and pen with which he wrote it hang at his side. Behind St. Jerome are a lion and bear playing among the rocks, while above them is a tiny figure of the saint kneeling in prayer. Coming down the hilly slope towards the valley in the middle of the picture is a saint; he is reading as he walks and drives a donkey before him. On the extreme right is a building with some figures, near by some men are working in the fields. These small subjects are said to refer to the legend of St. Jerome and the lion, but it is very difficult to fit them in with the story. Beneath the picture is the predella with half-figures of St. Francis and St. Mary Magdalene. In the middle is the figure of Christ in the tomb, supported by Joseph of Arimathea; on the ledge of the grave is a little basket containing the hammer that was used to nail Christ to the cross, and the pincers

that pulled the nails out again. The coat of arms at either end of the predella belonged to the Rucellai family, for whom the picture was first painted.

No. 2502, "The Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist," by Bastiano Mainardi (died 1513), is a much less simple picture of the Virgin and Child than any we have yet seen. Mainardi clearly took a greater interest in beautiful jewels and fine clothes than in little children, for he has lavished all his care on the accessories of the picture; the jewelled clasp that fastens the Virgin's cloak is very beautiful. The little Child, instead of carrying a simple bamboo cross, has a gorgeous golden one, studded with precious stones. Behind, on the right, three passers-by, two men and a woman, are walking up the road all unconscious of the Virgin and her Son.

Mainardi belongs almost entirely to the Renaissance, but in Piero di Cosimo (1462–1521) we have a painter who in mind belonged to the Middle Ages, though the spirit of the Renaissance exercised over him the greatest fascination. His "Death of Procris," No. 698, is an illustration of this attitude of mind. The story he has chosen is a classical one, and Procris is clothed in pseudo-classical garments, but the satyr has no connection with the ancients, for his prototype is to be found in numberless mediæval illuminated manuscripts.

The story of Procris is as follows: Cephalus, a mighty hunter, was married to the nymph Procris, who brought with her as wedding gifts a javelin that never failed of its mark, and Laelaps, swiftest of hunting dogs. Cephalus and Procris lived for a time

in the greatest happiness, but their love roused the envy of Aurora, Goddess of the Dawn, for she in her turn loved the hunter, who had no thought for anyone but Procris.

Now it happened that in the great summer heat, Cephalus used to go to a quiet and shady grove of trees and there rest until the evening, and one day in his absence Aurora went to Procris, and under the pretence of friendship, falsely told her that Cephalus was faithless to her, and was meeting another woman daily under the trees.

Stung with jealousy, Procris, unknown to the hunter, followed him next day, and when he got to the grove she hid in some bushes near by; but unfortunately she made a slight movement, and at the sound Cephalus, thinking some wild animal was in the thicket, threw his javelin, and the weapon that never missed hit poor Procris, wounding her past all help. The unhappy Cephalus, hearing her cry of anguish, rushed to the thicket and found his love was dying, and he had only time to tell her that he loved her above all things and no one but her before she died.

Here in this picture we see Procris lying on the grass among the flowers, the javelin-wound in her soft throat. Cephalus has left her poor dead body under the care of his dog Laelaps, and while he is away one of the satyrs, half-man, half-goat, whose home is in the woodlands, has timidly crept out into the flowery meadow that lies on the shore of the lake. He is a gentle, kindly creature, and he cannot understand why this pretty lady takes no notice of him and lies so still. He thinks she is not really dead but only asleep; but the wise dog Laelaps knows

The Death of Procris *No. 698*

PIERO DI COSIMO

better, he knows that her bright eyes will never open again. For ever will he faithfully watch there at her feet over the last long sleep of his gentle mistress.

The meadow lies along the shore of a lake bounded on the further side by low grey hills, birds are flying above and wading in the water, while Laelaps and two other animals are on the strand. This landscape, like so many others in early Italian pictures, is an ideal one. It is impossible to identify more than a few of the many flowers; the dog is like dogs in general, but it is like none in particular, and the same may be said of the landscape. The Italians seem to have enjoyed nature, that is to say landscape nature, in a purely general and imaginative manner. The human form they studied to its most minute detail, but they seldom seem to have looked closely at trees or rocks; and that this way of looking at landscape was by no means confined to artists is proved by the literature of the time. What can be more charmingly artificial than this description by Boccaccio:—

"Within the valley was a plain about half a mile in circumference, and so exactly circular that it might have been fashioned according to the compass, though it seemed a work of Nature's art, not man's: 'twas girdled about by six hills of no great height, each crowned with a palace that shewed as a goodly little castle. The slopes of the hills were graduated from summit to base after the manner of the successive tiers, ever abridging their circle, that we see in our theatres: and as many as fronted the southern rays were all planted so close with vines, olives, almond

trees, cherry trees, fig trees, and other fruit-bearing trees not a few, that there was not a hand's breadth of vacant space. . . . The lake was not so deep but that a man might stand therein with his breast above water, and so clear and pellucid was the water that the bottom, which was of finest gravel, shewed so distinct, that one, had he wished, who had nought better to do, might have counted the stones. . . . Bank it had none, but its margin was the lawn, to which it imparted a goodlier freshness."

The whole passage is of great interest, but too long to quote in its entirety. The landscape Boccaccio describes is conceived in the grand manner, a fitting background and setting for the high-born ladies and gentlemen and the noble saints and angels of the Italian painters.

But how different is the northern way of looking at nature; Chaucer, writing a few years after Boccaccio, says:

> "The busy larke, the messenger of day,
> Saluteth in her song the morning gray:
> And fyry Phœbus ryseth up so bright
> That all the orient laugheth for the sight:
> And with his stremes drieth in the greeves
> The silver dropes hanging in the leeves. . . ."

And he tells us how he loves the daisy, and kneels upon the grass worshipping it.

> ". . . of all the flowers in the mead
> Then love I most these flowers white and red,
> Such as men callen daisies in our town."

And he speaks of the time—

> "When that Aprille with his showres swoot
> The drought of Marche hath percèd to the root
>
> . . . . .
>
> And smale fowles maken melodie,
> That slepen al the night with open eye."

What a keen joy Chaucer takes in it all; he feels himself a part of nature, whereas Boccaccio stands outside and describes it.

The northern painters knew nature in the same intimate way as did Chaucer, while the Italians, if they inherited from the Ancients their splendid feeling for style, inherited also their cold and critical attitude towards all natural scenery.

Botticini (1446?–1497) in No. 781, "The Angel Raphael and Tobias," comes much nearer to painting a real landscape than Piero di Cosimo.

The angel and Tobias are stepping along at a great rate over a somewhat stony and arid tract of ground, and below them there winds a river: on the left it has come through a pass, and swirls round the foot of the hills; on the right it flows beneath a castle bridge, where part of its brimming waters form the moat, and after that it goes on and on towards the sea.

And now let us look at the Angel Raphael, Tobias, and the little dog. Did you ever meet people on a long and dusty journey as delightfully neat and well dressed as they are?

An angel we might perhaps expect to look smart and trim under all circumstances, but how about Tobias, who was only a boy? It would be impossible for his

hair to be more exactly curled or more glossily brushed, and surely his hands have never been as the hands of other boys!

It is not, however, only from the state of his hair and hands that we judge him to be such a clean and tidy lad (it is well that he is, otherwise his handsome clothes would be ruined before his journey's end), but look at the way he is carrying his fish! He does not wish to get his hands messy, so he has fastened a coloured cord, nicely tied in a bow, you will observe, round the head and tail, and he has passed the ribbon daintily over his first finger. In his hand he also holds a roll, on which we see the word "Ricordo." This is the letter he is taking to his father's friend at Rages. The other arm he has passed through the angel's, and he holds the angelic hand with the same daintiness that he does the fish. The Angel Raphael with equal delicacy holds the little box containing the gall and liver of the fish between his finger and thumb. You must remember that though we can see clearly that Raphael is an angel, Tobias could not; he could not see the angel's wings, and only knew his protector as the guide Azarias.

Do not fail to notice the lovely brocaded pattern on the sleeve of the angel. We find this kind of pattern slightly varied on all kinds of rich stuffs.

Every bit of this picture should be looked at, for the details are most beautiful. The painting of the fish and of the tassel-knots that finish Tobias' sash is especially noticeable. The angel wears a halo, but Tobias is only provided with a little arrangement of golden rays.

M.S.

The Angel Raphael and Tobias *No. 781*

BOTTICINI

Tobias' little dog is with his master. He is one of a famous company, for he, together with Kitmir, the dog of the Seven Sleepers, Balaam's Ass, Mahomet's favourite camel, and his horse Al Borak, were the only animals admitted into the Moslem Paradise.

The story of Tobias and the Angel was very popular in the Middle Ages.

Tobias was the only son of Tobit and Anna his wife.

Now Tobit was a rich man, but the king of that country was a cruel tyrant, and his anger fell on Tobit and he deprived him of all his goods and drove him out of the city. In addition to the loss of all his fortune Tobit at this time became blind, and great misery fell on him and his wife Anna and his son Tobias. At last one day Tobit called his son to him and said, "My son, many years ago in the days of my prosperity I left a sum of money in the care of my friend Gabael, who dwells at Rages. You must go to him and take a letter from me; then when he has read it ask him for the money and bring it back to me; and now go and find a trusty man who will bring you safely to Gabael and I will pay him wages."

So Tobias went into the city to search for a guide, and he found the Angel Raphael, but Tobias did not know he was an angel, he thought he was a man; and he said to Raphael, "I wish to go to Rages. Will you guide me thither?" And the angel answered, "I will go with you willingly, for I know the road to Rages well, for I have lodged with Gabael your father's friend."

After that Tobias took the angel to see his father, who commended Tobias to his care, and the next day Tobias and his little dog started on their travels in company with Brother Azarias, who was really the

Angel Raphael. Now they had not gone far when they came to the River Tigris, and as Tobias went down into the water to bathe, a great fish came up and would have devoured the youth, but the angel directed Tobias saying, "Take the fish." And Tobias did as he was told, and drew the fish to land. And when he had so done the angel said, "Open the fish and take the heart, the liver, and the gall, and put them up safely, but roast the rest of the fish, and it shall be for our evening meal."

And the next day, as they continued their journey Tobias asked the angel, "Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish?" and the angel answered: "Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any man we must cast them into the fire and make a smoke thereof, and the man or woman shall be no more troubled; as for the gall, it is good to put on the eyes of the blind."

And when they came near their journey's end, Raphael said, "To-night we will lodge with Raguel, your cousin, who dwells hard by. He is very rich and has an only daughter Sara, who is both fair and wise, and I will speak to her father for you that she may be given to you as your wife." To this Tobias answered, "I have heard, Brother Azarias, that this maiden has been given already seven times in marriage, and that all her husbands died on the wedding-day. It is said a wicked spirit loves her and he kills any man who dares to love her too, therefore I am afraid to become her husband lest I too die, for I am the only son of my father and mother."

"Nay, fear not, Tobias," answered the angel. "When you enter the marriage chamber, you will see a fire burning on the hearth. Take then the heart and liver of the fish, and throw them into the hottest part of the fire. Immediately a great smoke will arise, and when the wicked spirit smells it, he will fly away and never come back again. Then, after he has been put to flight, forget not, both you and the maiden, to kneel down and thank God for having saved you alive."

And Tobias rejoiced at the angel's words, and when they came to Raguel's house the young man saw Sara and he loved her, for she was very fair. Then Raguel made a feast, for he was glad to welcome his cousin Tobias, and during the feast the angel asked Raguel to give his daughter Sara in marriage to Tobias. Raguel turned to Tobias and said, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for it is right my daughter should marry you, her cousin; but first I must tell you that she has been already given in marriage to seven men and each one died on the wedding-day."

Tobias answered boldly, for he loved the maiden with a great love, "Nevertheless, I will eat nothing at this feast till you have promised that she shall be my wife." Now when the feast was ended Tobias and Sara went into the marriage chamber, but first Tobias fetched the heart and liver of the fish. And a fire was burning in the chamber, so Tobias threw the heart and liver into it and a great and horrible smoke at once arose which, when it came to the nostrils of the wicked spirit, forced him to fly away to Egypt, where an angel caught him and bound him for ever in chains.

Then Tobias said to Sara, "Come, let us pray that

God will have pity on us," and this is the prayer Tobias made : " Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is Thy holy and glorious name for ever. Thou madest Adam and gavest him Eve his wife for a helper, and of them came mankind. And now, Lord, I take this maiden Sara to be my wife, wherefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together." And Sara said, " Amen." Then they lay down and slept peacefully all night.

And while they slept Raguel arose and dug a grave for Tobias, saying, " I fear lest he also be dead," for he thought of the fate of Sara's first seven husbands. And Raguel said to his wife, " Send one of the maids and let her see whether he be alive : if he is not then we will bury him and no one will know of it." So the maid went in and found Tobias and Sara fast asleep ; then Raguel filled in the grave and gave praise to God, and made a wedding feast that lasted fourteen days.

While the feast was proceeding, Tobias called the angel and said : " Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant and two camels and go to Gabael and bring me the money, for Raguel will not let me depart, but my father is counting the days : and if I tarry long he will think I am dead."

So the angel went to fetch the money while Tobias stayed with Sara and Raguel.

Now all this while Tobit and Anna were wearying for their son, and as the days passed, and still he did not come, they began to despair, and his mother sat daily by the wayside looking for him and bewailing him, crying, " Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of my eyes."

And at the end of the fourteen days of feasting Tobias said to his father-in-law, "Let me go now to my father." So Raguel arose and gave him Sara his wife and the half of his goods, servants, cattle and money, and Tobias and Sara and the angel bade him farewell and started on their journey. And as they drew near home the angel said to Tobias, "You know well how we left your father; let us hasten on before Sara and prepare the house, and take in your hand the gall of the fish." So they hurried on in advance and the little dog went with them. As they went the angel said to Tobias, "I know, Tobias, that your father will open his eyes, and when he does so, drop some drops of gall on them, and he will rub them and his blindness shall pass away."

Then Anna, who was sitting by the wayside lamenting, saw them, and she ran forth and fell on the neck of her son, saying, "Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die." And they both wept. And when they got to their house Tobit came to the door. And in his haste he stumbled, for he could not see; but Tobias caught him and dropped the drops of gall upon his father's eyes, saying, "Be of good hope, my father," and Tobit rubbed his eyes and the blindness passed away, and he cried, saying, "Blessed art Thou, O God, and blessed is Thy name for ever: and blessed are all Thy holy angels, and Thou hast taken pity on me, for behold, I see my son Tobias."

Then they all went to the city gate to meet Sara with her train of servants and cattle.

The next day Tobias asked his father if he might give the angel the half of all his possessions, for all their

good fortune, he said, was due to Brother Azarias, and the old man said, " It is due to him."

So he called the angel and said : " Take half of all that ye have brought and go away in safety."

But the angel answered : " It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God. I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints and which go in and out before the Glory of the Holy One."

Then Tobit and his son fell upon their faces, for they feared.

But the angel said, " Fear not, for it shall go well with you, therefore give God thanks : for I go up to Him that sent me : but write all these things which are done in a book." And when they arose they saw him no more.

CHAPTER V

Sienese School

THE painters of the Sienese school had an extraordinarily strong sense of beauty, grace, and refinement, but from the first, except in the work of the greatest of them, it was wanting in strength and vitality. The figures of the saints are charming in their graceful draperies, but the limbs beneath their flowing robes are suspiciously unconvincing.

The painters of the other Tuscan cities revelled in overcoming difficulties, but the Sienese, after the time of Duccio and Simone Martini, Lippo Memmi, and Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, after the time of the great men, that is to say, always fought shy of finding new methods of producing their effects or of coming to grips with the problems of perspective. In consequence, their pictures became continually weaker and more archaistic, till at last their school ceased to be.

Duccio di Buoninsegna (about 1250–1319) is the only great Sienese master represented in the National Gallery, but to realize the strength and weakness of the Sienese school it is only necessary to compare the works of Duccio with Margaritone of Arezzo (1216–1299), and those of Matteo di Giovanni of Siena (about 1435-1495) and Benvenuto of Siena (1436–1518) with

the work of Botticelli at Florence (1444–1510), of Perugino in Umbria (1446–1523) and of Giovanni Bellini in Venice (working 1459–1516).

The most famed of all Duccio's pictures was the great altar-piece painted for the Cathedral of Siena. This huge picture, 14 feet long by 7 feet high, consisted of a number of panels, and was painted with many scenes on both sides. All Siena had been eagerly looking forward to the day when Duccio's picture should be finished, and when at length on the 9th of June, 1311, it stood ready in all its beauty to be taken from the workshop to the cathedral the townsfolk could not contain themselves for joy, and they rang all the church bells and made a public holiday, and forming themselves into a procession, carried it in triumph to its place of honour above the High Altar in the cathedral.

A large part of the altar-piece is still in Siena, and bears this inscription : "Mater Sancta Dei, sis caussa Senis requiei, sis Duccio vita, te quia pinxit ita," that is to say, "Holy Mother of God, be cause of rest to Siena : be life to Duccio, because he painted thee thus." The remaining parts, however, have been separated and sold.

The Cathedral of Siena was begun early in the thirteenth century, but though it was only half finished when Duccio's picture was painted, the marble pulpit by Niccolò Pisano was already in its place. As we have seen, it was this sculptor who first took for his models figures of Roman sculpture, and with him came the first faint dawn of the Renaissance ; but though Duccio must have known his work well, yet he himself is quite

untouched by the new influence that in another two hundred years was to prove so overwhelming.

We are fortunate in possessing in the National Gallery three panels belonging to the predella of Duccio's great altar-piece, Nos. 1139, 1140, and 1330, "The Annunciation," "Christ Healing the Blind," and "The Transfiguration."

In the Gospel of St. John we are told that one day Christ passed a man blind from his birth; He touched the man's eyes and then told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, and when the blind man had washed he could see; and in No. 1140 this is the story Duccio has to tell. In the left-hand half of the picture, Christ, with the twelve Disciples close behind Him, is touching the eyes of the blind man. If we had never read the story we should guess directly that the poor man was blind; his eyes are felt at once to be sightless, and he must use that long stick in his hand to feel his way about. A little keg of water hangs at his side, because in a hot country springs and streams are rare, and a blind man might easily miss them and wander about parched with thirst; therefore every morning his friends filled his little keg with water for the day. This part of the picture is complete in itself and tells the first part of the story. Christ touches the eyes of the blind man and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam. And there in the right-hand corner of the picture is the pool, which Duccio represents as a sort of trough, the water trickling into it through a carved lion's head. The blind man has washed and now he can see; he is raising his eyes to heaven in thankfulness to God for the gift of sight, his long staff has fallen and leans

against the edge of the trough; he does not want it now, for no longer will he go tapping and feeling his way about in the black darkness. So much for the story Duccio has told in this picture, now we will look at the way in which it is painted.

Duccio was born only about thirty-four years after Margaritone, but what a difference there is between the styles of the two painters. In Margaritone's pictures, even where he is telling a story, his little figures are all painted against a plain gold ground and are very stiff and wooden. But we find in this picture that instead of a gold ground behind the figures there are the houses and streets of a city. With what care Duccio has painted these houses; their little windows all filled with shutters to keep out the too bright rays of the sun. How gay and bright it is and how beautifully he fits each colour together; it is impossible to think of a blue and green that could more perfectly agree and set one another off than the blue and green of St. Peter's robes. It is as though Duccio had suddenly looked about him and said, "How beautiful the world is; I must paint all I see."

In Duccio's picture of the Annunciation, No. 1139, the Virgin seems just to have come through the half-closed door behind her; she must have been reading as she walked, for her book is still open in her hand. Suddenly she looked up and saw the angel before her; we can see that she is listening to his words, for she draws back a little in amazement though her face is calm. She wears a long cloak that partly hides her beautiful red dress, the folds of which are all drawn in shining gold. The angel is not flying, and yet he treads

Christ Healing the Blind Man *No. 1140*

DUCCIO

so lightly and moves so swiftly that he can scarcely be said to be walking. Above, between long lines of light that stretch from heaven to earth, is the dove, only Duccio has painted a bird that looks like a very small white eagle.

The last of the three pictures in the National Gallery that belonged to the predella of Duccio's great picture is the " Transfiguration " and this is by far the most rubbed and difficult to make out.

Christ stands on a little mount clothed in a dark robe, the folds of which are drawn in gold, and the figure is painted again somewhat according to the Greek tradition. St. Peter is represented in his beautiful blue and green robes that we noticed in the " Christ Healing the Blind."

No. 566, " The Madonna and Child with Saints," is also by Duccio di Buoninsegna. The top of the picture is shaped like a pointed arch, and on either side of it are fixed little painted doors that could be shut to cover the middle part. In early times the pictures that hung in the churches over the altars were often divided into three or more parts. Sometimes the two outer divisions were fixed to the middle one, but often, as in this case, the two sides had hinges and were small doors, and these side divisions, whether they were fixed or made into doors, are called wings, and the pictures " winged pictures."

In this picture of the Virgin and Child, though the Christ is still represented as a little wee man, yet He behaves more like a little child, for He looks up at His mother as He draws aside her veil. At the top of the picture are six prophets with their books and a figure of

God the Father in the middle. On the left wing of the picture, St. Dominic is painted; we know him by the star on his friar's frock. On the right wing is St. Margaret with her cross in her hand.

No. 1155, "The Assumption of the Virgin," is by Matteo di Giovanni (1435–1495). It is a picture full of the brightest colours, so bright that it is like the brilliant miniature pictures found in illuminated MSS.

The Virgin is a colossal figure; her great size no doubt is to emphasize her dignity as Queen of Heaven. She has just cast down her girdle to St. Thomas, who runs up to catch it. The angels are playing on many different instruments with decorous merriment; on the right one dressed in pink has a curious double drum.

It is to be supposed that the St. Sebastian, No. 1461, by the same master, was painted when Matteo was very young, for it is curiously flat and dry, "The Assumption" being most likely the work of his full-grown manhood.

The next Sienese artist in point of date is Benvenuto di Giovanni of Siena (1436–1518). He was the son of a stone-mason, and designed parts of the famous pavement of the cathedral at Siena.

In No. 909, "The Madonna Enthroned with St. Peter and St. Nicholas of Bari," the Virgin sits on a throne inlaid with mosaics (opus alexandrinum). Benvenuto, having used much of this in the cathedral pavement, would doubtless want to introduce it into his picture.

The Virgin is clothed in a robe of glowing crimson embroidered with patterns worked in gold thread, and round her is drawn a cloak of blue. The little Child

sits on a cushion of cloth of gold upon her knee. He is richly dressed in a purple garment, cut square, lined with scarlet, and embroidered with jewels; a string of beads is clasped round His neck, and a bracelet is on His arm, He raises His hand in blessing. On the top of the throne are two delightful angels playing small music on their little instruments; one of them dressed in green wears a neat white collar and a wreath of what looks like jasmine in her hair.

St. Peter and St. Nicholas of Bari stand on either side, their stately dignity contrasting with the youth and charm of the other figures. St. Nicholas of Myra is the same, of course, as he of Bari (his emblem of the three balls is in the head of his crozier), for the body of St. Nicholas was translated from Myra to Bari.

St. Nicholas was the only son of rich and noble parents, and from his earliest days he was of the greatest sanctity. It is recorded of him that when he was yet a baby in arms he refused to take nourishment more often than once a day on Wednesdays and Fridays, thereby strictly keeping the fasts of the Church.

On the death of his father and mother he became master of a large fortune, which he was determined to use in charity and to the glory of God. While he was thinking in what manner he might best dispose of it, it came to his ears that a nobleman, who was the father of three fair daughters, was in the greatest straits of poverty. This man was so poor that he was about to drive his eldest daughter out of the house to earn her living as best she might, exposed to all the dangers of a great city. When St. Nicholas heard this, he rose

secretly in the night, and taking a big piece of gold, he wrapped it securely in a thick cloth, and standing beneath the nobleman's house he threw it in at the window of the bedchamber where the maidens were sleeping. In the morning the nobleman found the gold, and using the gift as a marriage portion, wedded his eldest daughter forthwith to a wealthy suitor. Not long afterwards St. Nicholas heard that the family was as poor as ever, and that the second daughter was about to be driven forth. So he again threw a gift in at the window, only this time he threw in a mass of gold double the size of the first, so that it might furnish marriage portions for the two remaining daughters. The nobleman, roused by the sound of the falling gold, got up, and seeing a figure disappearing in the dark, ran after St. Nicholas and said, " Sir, flee not away, but let me see thee and know thee, who thou art," and the nobleman threw himself on his knees and would have kissed the feet of St. Nicholas. The saint would by no means permit this, but gave the nobleman his blessing and bade him tell no man of the gift of gold. Because of the portioning of the three maidens, St. Nicholas has as his emblem three golden balls.

Some time after the portioning of the three maidens, the Bishop of Myra died. All the bishops and abbots of the surrounding districts assembled in conclave to elect another in his place, and they chose the wisest among them, a certain bishop, to be their head and to direct their councils. Now it was revealed in a vision to this bishop that after a night spent in fasting and prayer, he should at the hour of mattins repair to the door of the cathedral of Myra, and the first man who entered

and whose name should be Nicholas, was to be chosen Bishop of Myra.

So all the holy men spent the night in fasting and prayer, and when morning came the bishop took his place by the cathedral door, and the first man to enter was Nicholas. Then the bishop stopped him and asked his name and he, his chronicler says, "simple as a dove," inclined his head, and answered, 'My name is Nicholas.'" Whereupon the bishop gave thanks for his vision, and Nicholas was taken and consecrated Bishop of Myra. It is interesting to note that in the life of St. Porphyry,[1] Bishop of Gaza, his historian, Mark the Deacon, tells how the people of Gaza before his election "were gathered together with the clergy, and took counsel for certain days into whose hands they should commit the bishopric, but achieved nothing, for contention prevailed among them, some desiring some of the clergy, and some of the lay-folk: for in sooth among the lay-folk also there were some of honourable and holy life."

Then John, who held the high priesthood, "straightway proclaimed a fast, and after three days the Lord revealed to him concerning the Blessed Porphyry."

Porphyry, who was then at Jerusalem, was sent for, and when he came to Gaza, "they seized the blessed man and ordained him Bishop of Gaza," greatly against his will. We may conclude from the case of St. Porphyry that there is no historical improbability in the summary consecration of St. Nicholas as Bishop of Myra.

[1] "Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza," by Mark the Deacon. Trans. by G. F. Hill.

No. 2482, "Virgin and Child," is also by Benvenuto di Giovanni of Siena.

The picture is in a deplorable condition, but it shows most markedly all the characteristics of its school. The figures are extraordinarily archaic, but the baby puts his arm round his mother's neck and the other little hand rests on his mother's big one, while the mother bends her head towards the Child; they are both real living human beings, stiff and wooden though they be, because they have the essential qualities of motherhood and childhood: love and protection on one side and love and confidence on the other. Benvenuto shows his love of beauty in the background, for the Virgin and Child are in a field of rose-trees that are in full bloom, and behind them is another field full of narcissus, and beyond are rocks and hills, a town and a castle. It is sad that a picture painted with such love and care should have been so cruelly ill-treated, and yet in its ruin it still has a delicate fragrance and charm, like some forgotten flower pressed long ago between the leaves of an ancient book.

The altar-piece, No. 1849, "The Nativity," is by Jacopo Pacchiarotto (1474–1540).

This picture shows the weakness of the Sienese school, yet it has the charm we so often find in the work of its painters: it is very difficult to say in what it consists, but there is a spirit of child-like happiness that seems to have been caught and rendered more often by the painters of Siena than by those of other schools.

In this "Nativity," the Baby lies upon the ground on a little bed of straw. His mother and Joseph kneel

The Baptism of Christ *No. 665*

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

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head, and above hovers the white dove. Behind them is a man pulling off his shirt that he too may enter the stream and be baptized : beyond again are four figures dressed in oriental-looking robes : three angels, one of whom is partly concealed by a tree, stand on the left.

There is a noble sincerity and simplicity about all these figures, but what perhaps shows Piero's power more than all is the way he has painted the landscape in which they are set. The stream is a most careful and delicate study of running water : in the foreground it is very shallow, and runs over a clear pebble bottom ; the Baptist's left foot rests on the low, shingly bank. Just behind the figure of Christ the stream becomes more narrow and deepens, forming a still pool, where the water moves so slowly that it does not break by a single ripple the reflections of the blue sky, green hillside, and the bright dresses of the men standing on the bank. The little bit of shore behind the man who is stripping is painted with the same care as is the foreground.

Piero has painted the distant landscape with extreme care : we see a castle with a road leading to it through fields and trees, but though the perspective has been worked out with such diligence he has failed to give completely the idea of distance, for the smallest and most far-away objects seem to have been painted with the same colour and the same brushes as those close at hand ; in consequence the distance looks like a foreground painted very small. He has not allowed for the aerial perspective produced by atmosphere. The painter has also made a most careful study of the foliage of the trees; compare the big one on the left

with that in the middle distance on the right. The trunk of the big tree, however, is quite featureless; it is either unfinished or has suffered in being cleaned.

Another very beautiful work by Piero della Francesca is No. 908, "The Nativity of Our Lord with the Angels adoring."

It is at once noticeable that parts of this picture are most minutely and exquisitely finished, while others seem scarcely begun. Look at the Virgin and then at the shepherds behind her. Is it not strange that every detail is finished in her face and figure, while the shepherds are barely blocked out?

Some critics account for this by saying that Piero della Francesca left it unfinished, while others consider it has suffered from some particularly disastrous process of cleaning and restoring. However, whatever the cause may be we still have a most wonderful picture left to us. There is a sweet intentness about the people represented in it: the gentle Virgin adores her Son with her whole soul, while He stretches out His little arms with all a baby's craving for its mother. The angels make heavenly music with heart and voice; the ass brays with vigour, while the ox listens to the angelic choir with bovine content. Joseph, instead of being represented asleep, as he so often is, sits on a wooden saddle that has just been taken off the ass, and the water-bottle leans against it; his mind is set on heavenly things, but he is tired and old. One of the shepherds is pointing to the sky, but they are both so roughly painted that we can only imagine what Piero della Francesca wished them to be.

In the foreground on the left are three goldfinches,

and a magpie sits on the pentise roof; on the right of the picture are the towers and spire of Arezzo.

The two foremost angels play lutes, while the one behind has a little violin; the other two are singing, their draperies hang in splendid folds, and the drawing of their ankles, feet, and hands is most delicate.

Della Francesca has painted a Virgin with a sweet pure face, and her hair of pale gold lies close to her head, bound by a jewelled band and covered with a gossamer-like veil. She wears a simple robe of grey falling in many folds from the high waist, an underdress of crimson, and a necklace with a hanging jewel. Her blue cloak has slipped from her shoulders and one corner of it is spread on the ground for the little helpless baby to lie on. A most heavenly spirit pervades this picture, and yet how delightfully human and even humorous it is! The two animals and Joseph make us realize that though the spirit is heavenly, yet we are most truly on the earth.

It is well to compare this picture with Della Francesca's "Baptism of Christ," No. 665. It seems likely that the latter was the earlier work, as the "Nativity" shows a greater ease and mastery: this is especially noticeable in the two groups of angels; that in the "Nativity" is by far the finer.

We come next to No. 1107, "The Crucifixion," by Niccolò da Foligno (first heard of 1458–1502). It is of interest because it shows how the painter revelled in overcoming the technical difficulties of representing the actual mechanism of grief and horror; so absorbed has he been in this that, though he is most sincere, he seems to have forgotten the spiritual side altogether.

Compare the noble grief and peace in Antonello da Messina's "Crucifixion," and Bellini's martyrdoms. Niccolò's picture has the qualities of a photograph, that is to say, it shows the outer manifestation of an emotion, but not its inner and spiritual significance. St. Francis of Assisi, the great saint of Umbria, is kneeling at the foot of the cross.

No. 1103, "Virgin and Child with Angels, St. Francis and St. Bernardino of Siena," by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (1440–1521), is not particularly beautiful, and it is very doubtful if it was painted by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo at all, but its interest lies in the fact that it gives us a portrait of St. Bernardino of Siena.

Most of the saints represented by the mediæval painters lived so long ago that their portraits are purely imaginary. St. Bernardino, on the contrary, is an historical personage, for he was born in 1380 and died in 1444. Not only are there in existence several biographies of him written shortly after his death, but his sermons were taken down word for word in some kind of shorthand by Benedetto, a fuller of Siena, and these give us a most vivid picture of the times in which the saint lived. St. Bernardino was a famous character the early part of the fifteenth century, and his features were well known to many. We do not know if any of the portraits that have come down to us were actually painted from the man himself, but they all bear a striking resemblance to one another, so that the probability is that they were taken from some contemporary sketch, and Fiorenzo's portrait shows all the marked characteristics of his face.

In making an estimate (no matter how cursory) of

the life of a people, it is necessary to arrive at some idea of what part religion played in it. St. Francis was born at Assisi in Umbria in 1182, and died in 1226, and his life was a poem greater and more wonderful than Dante's "Divine Comedy." His sense of the presence of God was so full and so complete that it tinged everything he looked upon, and surrounded him with an atmosphere of love and charity, and that state or condition of mind is perhaps a true definition of religion. In St. Francis we get the highest type of mediæval religion, but the ordinary man of his day was, of course, very unlike St. Francis, for he carried his love of definiteness into religion as into all else. For him the world was governed by a hierarchy, the Almighty was the supreme ruler, the seat of government being in heaven, with the saints as the heads of the various departments, to whom in time of need their worshippers made supplication. St. Margaret had charge of mothers at the time of child-birth, St. Lucy was to be applied to for diseases of the eyes, St. Rock and St. Sebastian were invoked for protection during plague; those who suffered from toothache went to St. Apollonia, St. Hubert was the patron of huntsmen and dogs—no matter what trouble or sin befell a man or woman of the Middle Ages, a saint was set aside for that difficulty and was ready to be applied to.

The Pope was looked on as the Almighty's vicegerent on earth, and the Church established a sort of tariff for saintly help in times of danger and difficulty, moral and physical, and the people were taught that though prayers were good, yet they were rendered far more efficacious by gifts at the shrines of the saints.

We have therefore to remember that the difference between the highest and lowest forms of religion formed a contrast as startling as do the lives of St. Francis and Ezzelino da Romano.

At this period very few people could read. So the clergy relied very greatly on the pictures hung in their churches to explain and illustrate their sermons. For the same purpose they taught the people to act Miracle Plays, which were simply Bible stories dramatised. The Miracle Plays were no doubt much alike in all countries, and in one of the Chester Miracle Plays (*circa* 1350) there occurs a passage describing the nativity, and it is particularly interesting as it shows that the painters carried out the popular ideas of the scene.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Sym, Sym sickerly,
Here I see Mary,
And Jesu Christ fast by
Lapped in hay.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Go we near anon
With such as we have brought;
Ring, brooch, nor precious stone,
Let us see if we have ought to proffer.

FIRST SHEPHERD (*approaching*).

Hail King! born in maiden's bower:
Prophets did tell thou should be our succour.
This clarkes doth say.
Lo! I bring thee a bell.
I pray, save me from hell,
So that I may with thee dwell
And serve thee for aye.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Hail Emperor of Hell
And of heaven also:
The fiend thou shalt fell
That ever hath been false.
Hail thou maker of the star
That stood as beforne,
Hail thee, blessed Bairn,
I bring thee a flagon.

THIRD SHEPHERD.

. . . . . .

Lo! son, I bring thee a cap,
For I have nothing else.
This gift I give thee is but small
Though I come hindermost of all,
When thou shalt them to thy bliss call,
Good Lord, yet think on me.

TROWLE (their boy).

Now, Lord, for to give thee I have nothing,
Neither gold, silver, brooch, nor ring,
Nor rich robes meet for a king:
Nor jewel have I none to give thee
For to maintain thy royal dignity.
But my pipe, take that of me,
As thou art God and man.

This little quotation from the Miracle Play well describes the picture, No. 1441, "The Virgin, St. Joseph, and Shepherds adoring Infant Saviour." It is in fresco, and is said to be the last work painted by Perugino (1446–1523), and to have been left unfinished at his death, in the church at Fontignano, near Castello della Pieve, where he died. The picture is in some ways the most poetic of all Perugino's works.

The little Baby lies on the ground. Does He foresee all that is before Him, that He looks so sad? His mother and Joseph kneel beside Him.

It is the time of the grey dawning when the world is full of mystery, we can feel the cool freshness of the morning on our faces. In the distance are tiny ethereal trees, and the shepherds like spirits are moving through the mists. The ox and the ass alone seem homely and natural.

No. 288, "The Virgin adoring the Infant Christ with the Archangel Michael and the Young Tobias," is accounted one of the finest pictures ever painted by Perugino. And these three panels formed part of a great altar-piece painted between 1494–1498 for the Certosa of Pavia.

St. Michael, a gallant young warrior, stands with his feet planted firmly apart. He is in full armour, the cuirass being fastened by straps of red leather. On his right side the little hinged lance-rest stands out: in charging the foe this was used to support the long lance, which was gripped firmly beneath the right arm and directed across the horse's neck so as to hit the other man on the right breast.

In one hand St. Michael holds a wand, a sign that he is the leader of the hosts of heaven; Nicolò da Tolentino, the commander in the battle of San Romano, No. 583, bears a like wand, and Froissart tells us that before the battle of Cressy on St. Crispin's Day, "the King [Edward III] was mounted on a small palfrey, having a white wand in his hand, and attended by his two marshals. In this manner he rode at a foot's pace through all the ranks, encouraging the army and en-

The Archangel Michael (from the Triptych) *No. 288*

PIETRO PERUGINO

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treating that they would guard his honour and defend his right : so sweetly and with such a cheerful countenance did he speak, that all who had been before dispirited, were directly comforted by hearing him." St. Michael's other hand rests on a shield not designed for practical purposes, but purely ornamental and symbolic. The device on it is the Gorgon's head, the death-dealing shield borne by Perseus : even in Perugino, most pietistic of painters, we find a reference to the classical heroes of pagan times.

The archangel's sword in its scabbard hangs at his side, and a pair of green and brown wings matches his green armour ; the pen-feathers of the right wing are clearly copied from those of a pheasant. He wears no helmet, but on his head is a small green cap tied with a gold-embroidered scarf. St. Michael is a dainty, debonair young warrior, and he seems to ignore the small but business-like pair of scales for weighing the souls of men that hangs beside him on the stump of a tree.

In the middle panel the Virgin kneels in adoration by her Son, and her face is beautiful and meekly sad : her hair, the colour of ripe corn, is bound in a golden net. The Child is seated on a round white cushion, and a rather sentimental-looking angel gazes at the Virgin while she kneels behind him. The Child, a dear little solemn baby, puts His finger to His mouth and fixes His eyes on His mother in a charmingly human way. These figures are set against a very beautiful but entirely unrealistic landscape where a blue river winds through a green valley; behind the Virgin is an iris, and above her head three angels sing without enthusiasm in the

sky. Compare the angels in Botticelli's "Nativity," No. 1034.

In the third panel a kind and beautiful angel holds the young Tobias' hand while in the other he daintily bears a little square box containing the heart, the liver, and the gall of the fish. The charming little Tobias looks up to the angel for protection; the boy is dressed in a green velvet tunic with a gold-embroidered dark blue sash, and on his shoulder he carries a red pack. In his hand is a most beautifully painted silver fish; and it is said that this picture was a votive one against blindness.

Raphael and Tobias are passing through a field of flowers, but beyond the poppy and narcissus it is difficult to say exactly what they are. An extraordinary predominance of blue and green runs through all these three pictures.

It has been said from very early times that Perugino achieved a great popularity in his own day by painting a particular type of religious picture, and that, finding how well it paid, he repeated the type again and again. Occasionally, however, his patrons objected to the monotony of his figures, and it is recorded by Vasari that when he was painting an altar-piece for the Servite monks of Florence, on its completion the critics protested against his repeating several figures in attitudes he had already used, saying they wished for new and original ones in their picture, to which Perugino made answer: "I have painted in this work the figures that you formerly commanded, and which then pleased you greatly: if they now displease you, and you no longer extol them, what can I do?"

In the picture No. 1075, "The Virgin with St. Jerome and St. Francis," Perugino's mannerisms are much more pronounced than in the Certosa altar-piece; there is a look of manufactured, sentimental piety about the three saints that is most disagreeable, and it is noticeable that five out of the six standing figures in the two pictures are represented in the same attitude, in every case the weight of the body is thrown on one foot while the other is slightly raised. The angels who hold the crown above the Virgin's head seem even more indifferent and detached than the singing trio in the triptych, and the stems of the lilies in their hands are twisted in a way no lily would grow, simply to fit into the angels' figures. Yet these disagreeable traits in Perugino's work must not blind us to his great qualities; no matter how mannered are his saints and angels, his children are always human and child-like: his colours match and set one another off in perfect harmony, and an extraordinary clearness and refinement of atmosphere pervades every picture.

We now come to a picture by an unknown artist, No. 647, "St. Ursula," but it is said by some critics to be by Giovanni Battista Bertucci, who flourished early in the sixteenth century. St. Ursula is dressed in a scarlet under-tunic, cut square at the neck and edged with a jewelled band, which continues down the front of the bodice, and is finished with an engraved gem set in an oval with four pearls. Round her is thrown an ample green mantle, fastened on the shoulders with the utmost precision (three folds on either side) with a pin set with a red stone to match her tunic. On her head she has a white cap bound with a fillet made of the finest gold

chain; just at the temples there are three most beautiful jewels, and from the last one the chain hangs down something in the manner of an ear-ring, and is threaded through a large blue stone drop at the end. The picture is full of the simple richness and the sumptuous neatness associated with an Italian saint. St. Ursula holds the long arrow, emblem of her martyrdom, with dainty grace: her robe fits her without a wrinkle, and it is new, and yet there is nothing aggressive in its newness. She is so fresh, so dainty, that she will be a fit companion for Perugino's St. Michael in the courts of heaven.

Though this picture is so entirely Italian in feeling, yet it is impossible to resist the conclusion that Bertucci, or whoever painted it, must have seen and greatly admired the works of the Flemish masters, for St. Catherine and St. Ursula both show the brilliant enamel-like finish in painting that is so marked a characteristic of the Flemish school; this is especially noticeable in the treatment of the jewellery.

The rulers of Italian states outbid one another in their efforts to secure the most renowned artists for their courts: they also paid high prices for pictures and sculptures for their art collections, so that it was easy and natural that the painters of the Italian school should have some acquaintance with the works of the Flemings.

The companion picture to "St. Ursula," No. 646, "St. Catherine," is clearly by the same hand. St. Catherine, the learned Princess of Alexandria, is robed in green, the square-cut bodice is embroidered with gold thread and precious stones, and her crimson

mantle is pinned in much the same manner as St. Ursula's. Her soft, straight yellow hair flows unbound over her shoulders, and she wears a most beautiful spiked coronet, with a square jewel at the base of each spike.

In the hand that rests upon her wheel she carries a palm branch, and in the other she bears a lady-like sword of a most uncomfortable pattern for use. The round pommel is ornamented and has a sharp edge, and within the circle is an engraving of what looks like a classical subject. The curious letters on the blade are the sword-maker's marks. With the saint is a small attendant maiden playing a violin.

St. Catherine, though equally sumptuously and richly dressed, is not quite so entirely neat and dainty as St. Ursula, but then she was a blue-stocking as well as a saint, which no doubt accounts for it.

CHAPTER VII

Umbrian School (*continued*)

THE favourite stories and romances of the Middle Ages throw a vivid light on the manners and customs of their times, and help us to see how much their point of view differs from our own.

Boccaccio's story of the "Patient Griselda" was retold in verse by Chaucer, and put into the mouth of the Clerk of Oxenford in the "Canterbury Tales." It is the story of a wife of low degree, treated, as it seems to us, with incredible barbarity by her aristocratic husband. In the present day, if a man marries his housemaid complications may arise, even if she is as compact of all the virtues as Griselda was, but if her husband pursued the same course as did the Marquis of Saluce he would soon put himself within reach of the law. The friends of the Marquis, however, evidently considered him a fine fellow on the whole, though perhaps a little proud. That the Marquis's manners were by no means unusual is amply borne out by contemporary records. Mr. G. G. Coulton, in his "St. Francis to Dante," tells us :

"The right of wife-beating was formally recognized by more than one code of laws : and it was already a forward step when in the thirteenth century the Coutumes du Beauvoisis provided 'que le mari ne doit

battre sa femme que raisonnablement.' But what were the limits of reason in this matter to the mediæval mind? We may infer them fairly well from the tales told by the Knight of La Tour-Landry (1372) for the instruction of his daughters. He tells, for instance, how a lady irritated her husband by scolding him in company, that he struck her to the earth with his fist and kicked her in the face, breaking her nose. Upon this the good knight moralises, 'And this she had for euelle and gret language that she was wont to saie to her husbonde. And therefor the wiff aught to suffre and lete the husbonde haue the wordes, and to be maister, for that is his worshippe." St. Bernardino, also, though he deprecates indiscriminate wife-beating, by no means altogether condemns the practice, for in one of his sermons he says: "I say not that you should never beat them, but, choose your time." Neither did the people of the Middle Ages share our views on the liberty of the subject in the treatment of their servants, for in the "Canterbury Tales," the Host tells how his wife—

> "Whan I bete my knaves,
> She bringeth me forth the grete clobbed staves
> And crieth 'Sley the dogges every one!
> And breke of them the bak and eek the bone.'"

Again, in the book already quoted, "From St. Francis to Dante," we find that "The Confessionale, a manual for parish priests, variously attributed to St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, specifies the canonical penances to be imposed for some sixty probable transgressions. One of these runs: 'If any woman, inflamed by zealous fury, have so

beaten her maid-servant that she die in torments within the third day, . . . if the slaying have been wilful, let her not be admitted to the Communion for seven years : but if it be by chance, let her be admitted after five years of legitimate penitence.' "

Poor Griselda had the double misfortune of being both a wife and a maidservant ; and certainly she had a correspondingly evil fate.

The next three pictures, Nos. 912, 913, and 914, are by a nameless Umbrian artist, and most likely formed three sides of a cassone or coffer. They deal with the story of the Patient Griselda. The Marquis of Saluce lived in Lombardy, " and Walter was this younge lorde's name."

Hard by his palace there dwelt a very poor man, and he had a daughter who was as good and diligent as she was beautiful :

> " She never yet was idel till she slept."

The maiden's name was Griselda, and Lord Walter determined to marry her, though he did not speak to her or tell her anything of his purpose. He provided robes and rich jewels for his bride, and invited his friends to the wedding. Then he rode to the village, where he met Griselda carrying water from the well ; he called her to him, and she fell upon her knees, and he asked her to marry him. Griselda, after protesting she was unworthy of so great an honour, said :

> " ' And here I swere that never wittingly
> In work or thought I will you disobeye
> Even to be dead, though me were loth to dye.' "

After that all her old rags were taken from her, and she was dressed in bridal garments and adorned with many jewels, and young Lord Walter "spousèd her with a ryng."

For some time they lived happily together, but when a little girl was born to them Walter determined to test his wife, and see if she were indeed as loyal and devoted as she gave herself out to be. So he went to her, and said his retainers had taken a great dislike to the baby because its mother was of low degree, and that she must give it up. And to this Griselda at once consented, because she said both she and her child were his to do what he would with.

Then he sent one of his sergeants, and when the man entered Griselda's chamber, he said:

"Madame, this child I am commanded for to take"; and he made as though he would kill it at once. Then Griselda meekly prayed:

> "So as he was a worthy gentilman
> That she must kiss her child ere that it dyed;
> And on her arm this litel child she laid
> With full sad face and gan the child to blesse
> And lullyed it and after gan it kisse."

Then she gave it back to the sergeant, saying, "Go now and do my lord's hests." But the sergeant took the baby to its father, who bade him, "upon peyne his head off for to swappe," to convey it with the greatest care to his sister, the Countess of Bologna.

At the end of four years Griselda had a little son, and till he was two years old his father and mother were very happy, but once more the cruel Walter wished

to try his wife, and again he asked her to give up her child, and again the Patient Griselda agreed, saying :

"'Nought grieveth me at all
Though that my daughter and my son be slaine,
At your command.'"

Then the "ugly sargeant" came in to her chamber as before, and seized the child, and this time she begged him to bury the little body, so that wild beasts should not devour it : but the man would not answer her, and he took the boy to the Countess of Bologna, Griselda thinking that he too was slain.

Now when her daughter was grown to be twelve years old, the Marquis devised yet another trial for the unfortunate Griselda. He went to her and told her that the Pope had given him permission to take a new wife ; he added that as she was already on the way to his palace Griselda could go back to her father's cottage as soon as she liked.

Meek and patient as ever, Griselda uncomplainingly accepted her husband's decree, and going to her chamber, took off her robes, and putting them with her jewels she returned them, and all he had ever given her, to Lord Walter, beseeching him only that he would allow her to keep her smock, so that she might not go back naked to her old home.

"'The smock,' quoth he, 'that thou hast on thy back,
Let it be still and bear it forth with thee.'"

And Griselda went back to her father's cottage, and dwelt there as a poor widow.

Now the time drew near for the arrival of the new

bride, and many were the preparations made at the palace; but they did not satisfy Lord Walter. So he went to Griselda and told her to come and direct the workers, for, he said, none knew his pleasure as well as she. At his words patient Griselda rose up hastily and went to the palace, and set the tables and made the beds and got all things ready for the new wife.

The next morning a beautiful young lady, accompanied by her brother and a brilliant train, came with Lord Walter to the palace, and Griselda clothed in rags was within, ordering all things for their comfort.

Lord Walter sought her:

> "'Griselda,' quoth he, as it were in his play,
> 'How liketh thee my wife and her beauty?'"

And Griselda answered that never had she seen so fair a lady, but she begged him to treat the maiden tenderly for, unlike herself, she had been gently bred, and could not endure adversity.

Then at last Lord Walter's hard heart softened, and he began—

> "To pity all her wifely steadfastness.
> 'This is enough, Griselda mine,' quoth he,
> 'Biforen all this folke,
> Thou art my wife, none other will I have.
> This is my daughter, which thou hast supposed
> To be my wife, that other faithfully
> Shall be myn heir.'"

On hearing these words Griselda swooned away for joy, and after that—

> "Ful many a year in high prosperitee
> Lyven these two in concord and in rest."

And there we may leave the Patient Griselda. Chaucer himself seems to poke a little sly fun at her, for he adds at the end of her history :

> "Griseld is dead and eke her patience
> And both together buried in Italye."

He evidently thinks such amazing virtue is not to be met with nearer home.

The story of the "Patient Griselda" was written about 1387, and Nos. 912, 913, 914, the story of Griselda in three divisions, were painted sometime in the following century.

The background of the first picture is divided into three groups. On the left there is a hill which breaks off suddenly at the edge of a cliff. A gaily-dressed company is spurring up it, hunting a stag, and if they continue their headlong pursuit much further, stag, huntsmen, and hounds will all be over the precipice!

Beyond the hill on the right is a fine triumphal arch; on its flat top are four gilt statues, and four bronze horses likewise gilt decorate the side facing us. On rising ground on the extreme right, is the little house where Griselda lived with her father. In the foreground on the left is Lord Walter on horseback, surrounded by his friends, and close beside them is a large square-headed well: Griselda, dressed in black, comes towards it, carrying a water-pot on her head. As he catches sight of her, the Marquis reins up his white steed in amazement at her beauty.

On the extreme right are two small figures in black; these are Griselda and Lord Walter again, he is leading her from her father's house.

The Story of Patient Griselda (Part II) *No. 913*

UNKNOWN UMBRIAN ARTIST

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In the foreground she is undressed, and has only a thin drapery round her, and her old clothes, her stockings, shoes, belt, and white smock, lie on the ground, while Lord Walter's friends bring her rich garments in exchange for her old ones.

In the middle of the picture the Marquis and the patient Griselda, both gorgeously dressed, and surrounded by a gay throng, are being married.

In the second picture, No. 913, stands a fine loggia. To the left we see the palace of the Marquis of Saluce, and on the right is the cottage that was Griselda's old home.

The loggia is a great open court, arched and roofed, so as to give shelter from the sun : many of these were built in Italy during the fifteenth century. Note in this picture the abandonment of the old use of gold over a pattern in gesso, but the Italians have by no means lost their love of gilding, for the loggia is covered with golden decorations. Again we read the story in the picture from left to right.

And here poor Griselda's troubles begin, for on the left we see the " ugly sargeant," wrapped in a black and villainous cloak, softly creeping away on tiptoe, the baby in his arms : he is twice pictured thus, showing he has made away with both of Griselda's children.

Under the middle arch of the loggia is a lawyer dressed in red, holding the deed of separation in his hand : he stands between the Marquis and Griselda, both of whom are in cloth of gold. Beneath the next archway Griselda is slipping off her gorgeous robe, and beyond, again clothed only in her white smock, she

leaves her husband's palace and takes her way, deserted and alone, to her father's cottage.

In No. 914 we have a very large loggia, with a succession of arches that stretch right across the picture; underneath it a banquet is spread, and many guests are feasting. On the left is the entrance to the palace, and Griselda in her old black dress is sweeping the steps. Beyond the loggia a brilliant retinue is seen approaching. On the right, the supposed bride, her brother, and the Marquis have dismounted, and are being presented by him to Griselda; and next, the Marquis asks her opinion of his new wife. That painful moment passed, Griselda returns to her many duties and proceeds to wait upon the feasters, till at last her husband, sitting at the head of the table, relents, and drawing her to him, embraces her, and tells her that his so-called bride is her own daughter. And we leave her, it is to be supposed, at the end of her many troubles, seated by her husband's side.

In No. 579, "Scenes from the Life and Death of John the Baptist," we looked, as it were, into a mirror that reflected the life of the Italians of Tuscany in the fourteenth century, and here, in the story of Griselda, we see life in Umbria a century later.

In Gerini's picture all the details are Gothic. Herod sits in his rough undecorated hall, a crimson hanging only concealing the masonry; he and his guests wear robes of beautiful shape and colour, but there is no rich embroidery to be seen, all is very simple.

Now the difference in life shown between this and the Griselda series is amazing when we consider that they are separated by only a hundred years; it is not only

the surroundings, but the whole spirit that is different. What has brought about the change ? The chief cause was, that by the time the story of Griselda was painted the Renaissance was in full flood. It was a time of amazing force and strength; both men and women began to live early, and lived hard.

We see in these pictures all the magnificence of a Renaissance Court. The architecture is copied from that of classical times; there were many triumphal arches still standing in Rome, and ancient bronze horses, gilt like these, may yet be seen on the façade of the cathedral at Venice. The gilt statues on the top of the arch and loggia are intended to be like Roman statues, but the artist has painted them standing in dainty, mincing attitudes, just like the courtiers below.

The Marquis and his friends wear dresses stiff with embroidery, and many jewels adorn their persons. They ride fine horses, and rare animals have been collected to do them pleasure.

The retinue that accompanies the Marquis's daughter is more like a travelling menagerie than a bridal train, and on the pavement are two little monkeys and a bear, chained to pillars, and a tiny deer sniffs at an apple. Wild animals of all kinds were much prized by royal and wealthy persons.

"In 1255 Louis, King of France, presented King Henry III with an elephant, the first ever seen in England, or even in the countries on this side of the Alps: according to Matthew Paris, 'wherefore the people flocked together in order to see this novel sight.' Being landed at the port of Sandwich in Kent it was

conveyed by road to the Tower, and the sheriffs of London were directed 'to cause to be made without delay at our Tower of London a house for our elephant 40 feet in length and 20 feet in breadth, of such strength as may be necessary.' "[1]

Sixty years later, "In 1313 the sheriffs are directed to pay out of the ferm and issues of the city of London a quarter of mutton daily for the use and maintenance of the King's lion, and three halfpence daily for his own wages to Peter Fabre of Montpellier, keeper of the King's lions in the Tower of London, and in 1315 the same individual is to be paid sixpence a day for the maintenance of the King's leopard and three halfpence a day for his own wages."[1]

From these records it is clear that even in England wild animals from distant lands were by no means unknown, and in Italy they were far more common, because there there was continual communication with the East. Lorenzo de' Medici had a giraffe in Florence, where it was seen in a display organised when Galeazzo Sforza and Pius II visited the city in 1459.

"There was also a great hunt in the Piazza de' Signori, which was closed all round with a stockade, and inside were turned loose two lions, two horses, four bulls, two young buffaloes, a cow, a calf, a wild boar, a giraffe, with twenty men and a large ball of wood, so made that a man could stand upright inside in order to exasperate the animals."[2]

The ruler of the little State of Urbino during the

[1] Extracts from Documentary History of the Tower of London. Harold Sands, "Archæological Journal," June, 1912.

[2] "Animal Life in Italian Painting." William Howe.

greater part of the fifteenth century was Duke Federigo of Montefeltro.

In an age and country noted above all others for the cruelty and wickedness of its rulers, this duke offers a welcome contrast. He was a pupil of the gentle humanist, Vittorino da Feltre, and never lost his love of learning and letters. Federigo had a magnificent library, and he not only possessed books, he went still further and read them. He ruled his dukedom in patriarchal fashion. ever thinking of the welfare of his people. By profession he was a condottiere, hiring himself and his army as occasion offered to neighbouring princes, and while treachery and bad faith were the rule, Federigo was always faithful to his employers.

His son Guidobaldo succeeded him, and it was at his court, under the inspiration of his Duchess Elizabetta Gonzaga, that Baldassare Castiglione wrote his treatise on the "Courtier," drawing for his contemporaries the portrait of the perfect gentleman.

The two pictures, "Rhetoric," No. 755, and "Music," No. 756, are part of a series painted for Federigo's library, where "every volume was bound in crimson and silver."

Other pictures belonging to the series are in Berlin and Windsor: they used all to be said to be by Melozzo da Forli (1438–1494), but some of them have been claimed for a Fleming, Justus of Ghent. At the same time they may be described here, whoever painted them, since the critics are by no means agreed on the matter.

In the picture "Rhetoric," a lady sits upon a magnificent throne set with many large crystals and

precious stones. The legend on the marble wall above her head means, "Duke of Urbino, Montefeltro, and . . .", and is a part of the inscription describing the titles of Federigo that ran round the top of the wall of the library, so that of course only parts of it appear in each picture.

The lady is dressed in black, and wears a belt of plaited pearls: strings of pearls and two rows of golden beads are about her neck, and her thick curly brown hair is twined with bay leaves. Her feet are shod with red shoes, and rest on a board at the top of four steps covered with green brocade. This brocade does not stretch from side to side as in the companion picture. It is edged with a red border, and on the two highest steps it shows the wood beyond.

The lady is holding out a book to a young man who kneels before her, and she points to the open page with the first finger of her right hand.

The youth wears a long black robe which almost entirely covers his under-dress of wine-coloured velvet, and his red hood hangs over his shoulder. His face is turned away.

Music, like Rhetoric, is represented as a richly dressed lady. Her robe is red, and she sits on a throne in an alcove of Renaissance architecture. She wears a heavy diadem on her unbound hair, and round her neck is a curious jewel hung on a strange gold chain. In one hand she holds a book while with the other she points to a small portative organ. Behind her is a marble wall, and against it hangs a little sprig of bay.

Above, from left to right, the inscription is continued: it means, "Standard-bearer of the Church."

Rhetoric *No. 755*

MELOZZO DA FORLI

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The lady's throne is reached by four steps covered in green brocade, and on the lowest one a young man kneels on one knee; he wears a rich tunic of black and grey brocade, edged with brown fur, and the sleeve is slashed to show the red under-sleeve and fine white shirt. No doubt to spare his smart red hose he is kneeling on a scarf that falls from his shoulder. The youth has a serious thoughtful face, and his hands are stretched out before him towards the lady, who is about to give him the book. His red cap lies before him on the second step.

The green brocade does not completely cover the lowest stair, but it shows a reddish selvage and the dark wooden step beneath.

As we have seen, the two inscriptions are part of a long one which ran along the cornice above the picture, giving all the titles of Federigo. He was created standard-bearer of the Roman Church by Pius II in 1465, and Duke of Urbino by Sixtus IV in 1474, and it was soon after the latter date that the pictures were painted.

In the picture of "The Return of Ulysses to Penelope," No. 911, by Pinturicchio (about 1454–1512), Ulysses is just coming home after his twenty years' absence, and Pinturicchio tells us the tale translated into the terms of his own times.

Penelope is represented as an Umbrian lady; she is sitting busily weaving tapestry, that wonderful work that during her husband's absence she has worked at all day and unravelled all night. The big inlaid frame of the loom takes up nearly all the space in the bare, airy chamber, which is paved with marble. The lady's feet are on the treadles, while her hands work the great

frame to and fro. Her little handmaiden sits humbly by her side winding the thread off a ball (with which a cat is playing) on to the spindle ready for her mistress's use. Above Penelope's head hang the quiver of arrows and the bow, unbent since Ulysses sailed away to Troy. The suitors stand in a group on the right: for twenty years they have settled like locusts in Penelope's quiet home. The leader comes hurrying across the chamber; he is clearly urging the lady for the hundredth time to give him her hand, and her fortune; behind him, hawk in hand, stands another youthful lover; he wears a glove, for the hawk's talons are both long and sharp. The suitor who stands between these two has come from a very distant land, for he looks like a Tartar or a Mongol. Little do these gay youths know the dreadful fate that is about to overtake them, but in the doorway behind them stands a wayfarer—the strong, the wise Ulysses, who has come home at last to deliver his faithful Penelope from all her trials.

Through the big unglazed window is seen Ulysses' ship; her sails are full as the wind drives her past the sirens who are singing to Ulysses bound to the mast. The wanderer flies the Cross of St. George in the pennon on his topmast! To the left is Circe's island, where Ulysses and another stand transfixed with horror at the sight of their companions changed into black pigs.

No. 693, "St. Katherine of Alexandria," is also by Pinturicchio, and in this delightful little picture he has painted St. Katherine as a most lovable, human saint. She stands before a golden background, her long hair unbound, book and sword in hand, and her wheel

beside her. The wheel and sword are the instruments of her martyrdom, while her book symbolizes her learning. The donor of the picture kneels a suppliant before her, and behind the two figures is a landscape, calm after a storm, like St. Katherine's life.

CHAPTER VIII

Ferrarese School

THE painters of the school of Ferrara are notable more for their ingenious and lively fancy, than for their love of beauty: they were also considerably influenced by the classical school of painting developed in Padua by Squarcione. The Court of Ferrara under the Estensi was one of the most cultivated in the Peninsula, and we have in No. 770, "The Portrait of Leonello d'Este," a picture of one of the most art-loving princes in Italy. This portrait was painted in 1447 by Giovanni Oriolo of Faenza, who is first mentioned in 1443, and died 1473 or 1474.

Though Leonello was trained to arms under one of the best soldiers of the time, Braccio da Montone, he was a peace-loving prince, and a wise and just ruler, a pupil of the humanist Guarino, who developed his great natural love of learning and art. He was passionately fond of music, and musicians from all parts of Italy came to take service under him. Among the artists employed at his court was the painter-medallist Pisanello, the Fleming Rogier van der Weyden, and the Venetian Jacopo Bellini. Leonello was succeeded by his brother Borso, a strong and crafty ruler, who induced Pope Paul II and the Emperor Frederick III to acknowledge him Duke of Ferrara, Modena, and

St Jerome in the Desert *No. 771*

BONO DA FERRARA

Reggio. Under Borso and his brother, Ercole I, a school of Ferrarese artists arose.

We come first to a man who lived at the same time as Giovanni Oriolo, working 1450–1461, namely Bono da Ferrara, painter of a delightful picture of "St. Jerome in the Desert," No. 771. In the background at the head of a rocky valley is a little church, clearly a very holy place, for the rays of heavenly light stream from its open door. It is the church at Bethlehem, and St. Jerome lived at the monastery hard by. In the cool of the evening, when the sun was setting and the birds flying home to rest, St. Jerome came through that grove of strange trees, carrying his books, his rosary, and his hat, and followed by his lion. When he had passed the high rock where a stag is feeding, he took his way carefully over those sharp stones (for his feet were bare) and came to a low rock, a natural seat with a ledge above it that formed a shelf for his books.

And the saint, because he was old and tired, sat down to rest, first putting his cardinal's hat in a safe place behind him, and then took out his rosary and began to say his prayers. What a strange rosary it is! In each wooden bead the tooth of an animal is stuck.

Is this not a delightful picture? In the fading evening light the aged saint, who is nearing the close of his long, eventful life, sits to rest and meditate and pray, and at his feet lies his lion, who is aged too. He lies and dreams of his triumphs in the chase, long ago, before he became the honoured companion of a saint.

To this picture, so simple, so romantic, and so sincere,

No. 597, "St. Hyacinth: Dominican," by Francesco Cossa (about 1435–1477) offers a great contrast. It is also sincere, and in a sense romantic, but certainly it is not simple.

It was once the middle part of an altar-piece, and the wings are now in the Brera Gallery at Milan, while the predella is in the Vatican Gallery in Rome.

The panel represents the glorification of a Dominican saint, said to be St. Hyacinth, and in the two wings are St. Paul and St. John the Baptist. The predella purports to show scenes from the life of St. Hyacinth, though it is impossible to fit them in with any known legends about him. He was not canonized, moreover, till 1594, more than a hundred years after the death of Cossa, and his cult did not become popular till the seventeenth century. It is much more likely that it represents either St. Dominic or St. Vincent Ferrer, most probably the latter, for he was canonized in 1455, and was extremely popular during the lifetime of the painter. "The attitude of the central figure and his attribute (the opened book) are, moreover, peculiar to St. Vincent Ferrer in Italian fifteenth-century art."[1]

It is a most curious picture. The saint, dressed in the frock of a Dominican, holds in one hand a book, while the other is raised in blessing. He stands on a little low table or platform covered with a red cloth. Behind him is a pillar, and on the capital is a long stick with a wooden ring at the end. A rosary is fastened to the ring and hangs in a loop behind him, the small beads of coral and the larger of crystal.

[1] Crowe and Cavalcaselle. North Italian Painters. New Edition, *ed.* T. Borenius.

St. Hyacinth : Dominican *No. 597*

FRANCESCO COSSA

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The background shows a strange castle, half palace, half fortress. On the left, the rocks must be covered with a thin layer of earth, for grass grows upon them, of a most lovely green : a little man in scarlet hose and crimson tunic walks briskly down the path sunk between the grass-grown rocks, and on the right two spearmen are talking beneath a rocky archway. Above, in the sky, Christ sits upon His throne, and on either side of Him are angels, bearing the instruments of His Passion. It must be confessed that the upper part of this picture comes as a surprise, for the lower part might serve as an illustration to some romantic legend. The strange and airy palace in the background is a fit habitation for Titania and Oberon, and the dainty little warriors who defend the lower fortalice all belong to fairyland. The saint, standing on his mystic platform, raises the index finger of his right hand, as though intent on some far-away sound, and the chain of crystal and coral behind him, hung on its magic ring, speaks rather of spells and wonders than of church and mass.

The old castle, the home of the Dukes of Ferrara, is to the present day a place of legend and romance. It stands firm and square in the middle of the city, and with its machicolated towers and walls, its moats and dungeons, and its painted halls, is a true palace of the Middle Ages, half pleasure-house, half fortress.

No. 773, "St. Jerome in the Desert," by Cosimo Tura, born before 1431, died 1495, is part of a picture originally in the Certosa at Ferrara : another bit, with a crucifixion, is in the Brera.

Tura has here made a most careful study of the human body. The hands, arms and feet, and the worn

and earnest face have been looked at again and again, till the painter knew every vein and every muscle by heart. It is most interesting to see how Tura gave his whole soul to the mastery of the difficulties of this figure: the rest of the picture is painted delightfully, but it is easy to see that he accomplished it with ease after his desperate strivings with St. Jerome. He painted his rocks from imagination, and he did not trouble much about the form of his tree-trunk, though he has noted its scaly bark. On the left some monks who have been labouring in the fields are going home, up the terraced rocks to their fine monastery on the mountain slope; it must be St. Jerome's monastery at Bethlehem, but no doubt he will stay alone in the desert till night falls. The blood drips from his breast as with passionate penitence he strikes himself again and again with a big, sharp stone. His lion has gone down to drink at the little stream, and stands on a low bridge. Above the saint sits an owl, a frog in his claws; he is awake, for he knows that night will soon fall; a bird, possibly a woodpecker, clings to the trunk of the tree on the other side. On the right, further up the stream, kneel two small figures, Duke Borso and a monk, and above them in a green meadow is a herd of cows, most carefully painted. The treatment of rock in both Cossa's and Tura's pictures is extremely interesting. In the St. Vincent Ferrer, the rocks form themselves into arches and bridges, and gradually grow into a strange and airy palace. Cossa has clearly either never been in a rocky country, or if he has, has never looked at their formation. In the Middle Ages there was a convention that mountains were built up of rocky

terraces bordered by precipitous cliffs. Virgil and Dante, we know, climbed in circles up the Mountain of Purgatory.

The poet describes again and again the ever ascending terraces with the high rock on one side and the precipice on the other, and Tura, in his St. Jerome, shows us just what the Mountain of Purgatory looked like. He has even put in the quiet meadow on the side of the mountain, only, instead of unhappy monarchs sitting in a flowery mead, listening to the strains of the "Salve Regina," we find cows peacefully pasturing under the care of a cowherd. Tura paints with infinite care, down to the minutest detail: observe the cow and the calf and the tiny cowherd; both the St. Jerome and the St. Vincent Ferrer are full of the finest observation. That being so, why did Cossa and Tura both fail so entirely when they came to paint rocks? The most obvious explanation is that neither of them had ever been in a mountainous country, and that they painted rocks according to the convention prevalent at that time.

From the influence of Squarcione, which is visible in their paintings, it is probable that both painters learnt their art at Padua, in the low-lying country near the Venetian lagoons. Afterwards they entered the service of Duke Borso of Ferrara: the city now lies in the midst of a huge, dry plain, but in those days it was marshy, and numberless slow rivers and sluggish streams flowed through it. Cossa, it is true, spent the latter part of his life at Bologna, but the St. Vincent Ferrer was painted before he left Ferrara. Tura seems to have spent all his life at Ferrara, though he painted for other

patrons besides Borso : it is quite likely that to the end of his life he never saw a mountain.

Tura has been very unlucky in his pictures in the National Gallery, for the "Madonna Enthroned," No. 772, by him, is again only a part of a much larger work, a polyptych from the church of St. George without the walls of Ferrara.

It is singularly ugly. Tura was clearly interested in the world around him, we see evidence of the liveliness of his mind all through the picture, but he does not show the slightest love of beauty. His Virgin is not only ugly but full of affectation : it is impossible to imagine a less attractive baby, its misshapen limbs seem covered with leather instead of soft flesh. On the steps of the throne are four plain, wingless angels ; their halos are painted so solidly that they look like mortar-boards, making the angels resemble respectable choir-boys. Two in the foreground a degree less plain than the rest are playing a little organ. Mr. A. J. Hipkins says of this picture : "One of the angels on the left holds an ornamental viol, having five strings with a carved man's head : another angel, on the right, a similar viol, with a carved woman's head. In the centre is placed a positive organ, that is, a small organ not intended for removal. The player is on the left, in front of the organ : the blower is on the right, behind it. Only natural keys are visible, but there are three stops to be drawn out from the side in the primitive way, by means of cords attached to them, to control the pipes, of which thirty are visible and three are drones. These pipes are grouped in columnar disposition, like an hour-glass, and not in order of ranks,

St. Jerome in the Desert *No. 773*

COSIMO TURA

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as usual with small organs. It is noticeable that the player uses both hands held nearly in the modern position."[1]

The curiously shaped viols the angels play are very often represented in MSS. of the early fourteenth century, and are called mandorlas. An instrument closely resembling the mandorla is played in the Balkan States to the present day.

The Virgin's throne is overlaid with an immense parade of Renaissance learning, and is cut away beneath to show the blue sky; this gives a most uncomfortable effect because it is so entirely unstructural. On its apex sits an eagle, the symbol of St. John the Evangelist, painted to look like an owl, the emblem of wisdom with the Ancients: below are a winged lion and ox representing St. Mark and St. Luke, painted in as classical a manner as possible, and the angel, who is taking no notice whatever of the Virgin and Child, but is pretending to read with great energy, represents St. Matthew. Thus we get the symbols of the four Evangelists, painted in the pagan manner of the day. Two nude figures hold the cord that supports the awning above the Virgin's head. On the top of the two sides of the throne are ugly terminals, and below are inscriptions written in Hebrew characters. This "Madonna Enthroned" of Tura's, though it is so ugly, is extremely interesting, for it illustrates two strong tendencies of its time, and shows the spirits of Christianity and paganism forced, as was so often the case in the early Renaissance, into an ill-assorted and uncomfortable partnership.

[1] A. J. Hipkins, "The Hobby Horse," No. 1, p. 19.

We now come to the earliest picture we have in the Gallery dealing with everyday life, No. 2486, "A Concert," by Ercole Roberti (1450–1496). Two men and a woman are making music together: all three are singing, while the man in the middle accompanies them on his mandoline. The face of the woman is beautiful in its utter unconsciousness; she is feeling and thinking of nothing but her singing. A large book of music lies in front of the mandoline player, and he looks at it as he plays: a tiny violin is beside it. He and the lady, whose hand rests on his shoulder, must surely be portraits; they are clearly the two principals; the third man seems only put in to balance the composition. The lady wears a fine jewelled band round the top of her green velvet bodice, and her hair is bound in a net of fine gold. The painting of the hands is singularly poor.

The fine altar-piece, No. 1119, "The Virgin and the infant Saviour enthroned with St. John the Baptist and St. William," by Ercole di Giulio Grandi (1465–*c.* 1530), may be taken as typical of the middle Renaissance. In it we get the work of the first-rate craftsman who has overcome all the technical difficulties of his art. Perspective, drawing, and the management of colour all fall into their right place; the picture is a stately, solid piece of work, but there is no evidence of travail of soul when it was brought to birth, and it is noticeable that the least interesting parts of the picture are the faces of the saints. It is impossible to consider it the highest form of art, to paint marble and mosaic absolutely realistically, and then to represent them as being set in inlaid wood.

The Virgin sits on a high and magnificent throne, set beneath an archway decorated in the most elaborate manner of the Renaissance. The lower part of the throne is meant to represent intarsia or inlaid woodwork, of which the Italians were very fond. Some of the panels with which it is inset are painted in colour, while others represent marble bas-reliefs with a gold mosaic background. Beginning on the left is : Christ among the doctors in colour ; the flight into Egypt, white marble with gold mosaic background ; the massacre of the Innocents in colour ; the presentation of Christ in the Temple, marble, gold background ; and the Nativity in colour.

On the next tier of the throne are the heads of two turbaned sages, possibly representing two prophets, and immediately beneath the Virgin's feet are Adam and Eve ; these medallions are all painted to represent white marble.

The archway beneath which the throne is set is carved and decorated to its last inch, the Annunciation being represented in a semi-classical manner in roundels set in the spandrils of the arches. The Virgin and the Angel Gabriel are marble half-length figures against a gold mosaic background. On either side of the archway in colour are, the presentation of the Virgin in the Temple and the sacrifice of Isaac.

In the midst of all this magnificence sits a woman with a little Child standing on her knee. And yet this Virgin of Ercole Grandi's is almost too dignified and stately to be a woman at all : with one hand she supports her Son, while the other holds His small one in hers. The painter has given a wonderful majesty

to this little Child, who raises His right hand in solemn benediction.

On either side of the throne stand St. William and John the Baptist. The former is a debonair young warrior, bareheaded, and clothed in full armour, with his drawn sword in his hand. His hauberk, or coat of mail, is ornamented with bands of copper. The pieces of chain mail at the knee are for ornament only. John the Baptist offers a red book to the Virgin and child; in his rough garments he looks almost out of place (though he is so great a saint) among such gorgeous surroundings and in company with such majestic, well-bred, well-nurtured personages.

Giovanni Battista Benvenuti, called L'Ortolano (died about 1525), of whose life scarcely anything is known, is by no means so faultless a painter as Ercole di Giulio Grandi, but his feeling for landscape, and above all, his romantic figure of St. Demetrius, make his No. 669, "St. Sebastian, St. Rock, and St. Demetrius," a far more interesting picture than the one we have just been considering.

The landscape background is most unusual, and quite unlike those generally seen in the Italian pictures. Compare the landscapes in the works of the other masters of the Ferrarese or Bolognese schools, the desert in Tura's St. Jerome, the castle and rocks in Cossa's St. Vincent Ferrer, the little scene in Costa's Virgin Enthroned, in fact, compare this subject with any other of an earlier date, and it will be seen at once how completely different it is. The farmhouse with its outhouses, its carts, and its farm servants, the castle in the distance, the grass and the ploughed field, all

St. Sebastian, St. Rock and St. Demetrius *No. 669*

L'ORTOLANO (GIOVANNI BATTISTA BENVENUTI)

beneath the sunset sky, have been thoroughly and completely observed. L'Ortolano must have seen this scene somewhere quite in the northern part of Italy.

In the foreground are three saints. St. Sebastian is fastened to a tree, and considering that he is pierced in many places with arrows, he is pointing towards heaven in a most unreal and melodramatic way. On the left is St. Rock, who is dressed as a pilgrim and carries his staff in his hand, while by his side on the ground are his wallet and water-bottle.

On the right stands a most romantic figure. The painter, on a little cartel at the knight's feet, tells us it is St. Demetrius. He is a man of about forty-five, and with the exception of his helmet and gauntlets he is clad in full armour. He wears a fine suit of steel, with a fluted breastplate, and the shoulder-pieces are articulated so as to give the arm full play; the wings of the elbow-cop that protect the elbow-joint are fluted also; his sword is gilt at the top and very beautifully chased and engraved.

St. Demetrius is brooding over the past, his head is sunk on his hand, and he leans on his good sword, that has been his friend for many a long year. This is no young, untried knight, but a war-worn veteran, who has been on many a bloody field, lost as well as won, and he knows full well that victory often costs as dear as defeat. In the foreground is a crossbow, very carefully painted, showing the bone ratchet for the pin, and the long handle to wind up the string: close beside it is a quiver full of arrows. This picture was the altar-piece of the parish church at Bondeno, near Ferrara, and was probably painted as a votive

offering for deliverance from plague, as St. Sebastian was the most powerful saint to be invoked against plague, and St. Rock was only second to him in his power over epidemics. St. Demetrius may have been the patron saint of the donor.

St. Sebastian was one of the most popular saints in the Middle Ages, but his story is not so well known now as it was then, so it may be of interest to tell it again here.

St. Sebastian was a noble knight who was born at Narbonne and educated at Milan. Though born and brought up in the Christian faith, he took service under the Roman Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, who were heathens; they advanced him to high honour and command in their army, and made him governor of the palace, and both the Emperors loved him well. So St. Sebastian had to remain near the court, dressed in splendid and knightly garments, ever ready to go into his royal masters' presence.

The Emperors Diocletian and Maximian worshipped false gods, and they bitterly hated and persecuted the Christians: whenever a Christian was found in Rome he was taken before the Emperors, and if he refused to go to the temples and worship the idols, he was tortured, and if he still persisted in remaining true to his faith, he was killed.

Now the Emperors did not know that their favourite knight was a Christian, and St. Sebastian said nothing, not because he was afraid of torture and death, but because, holding a high and powerful position, he was often able to help the poor Christians when they were imprisoned and persecuted.

It chanced that two knights who were brothers were imprisoned and charged with being Christians, as indeed they were: under many tortures they had stood firm and now they were condemned to die. The day before they were to be led to execution their aged father and mother came to visit them. They were weeping very bitterly, and first the old man spoke: "Ah! how can you forget your father and mother and the sorrow of their hearts? If you die our life is over, for we are old and do but live in you. Give up this obstinacy. What is it that you are asked to do? only to burn a little incense in the temple of our Emperor's god." And when their father ceased speaking, their mother continued:

"My most dear children," she said, "have mercy on your sorrowful mother that is in such great misery and weeping for you. O unhappy that I am, what shall I do that lose my two sons."

And while their father and mother thus wept and lamented, the knights' two wives with their little children came, and throwing themselves on their knees before their husbands the women said: "Dear husbands, consider in what a state you leave us and your children. Who will take care of us? What will become of our children and our goods if you give yourselves up to die shamefully?"

So far these brave knights had boldly acknowledged that they were Christians, and had refused to worship idols even on pain of death, but when they heard these words they began to feel it was too hard a thing to do. They did not fear death, but they could not bear to bring such grief and anguish on those they loved. And

at last they wondered whether indeed they should go into the temple and at any rate pretend to worship the idols there.

When St. Sebastian heard this he went to them and said :

" O noble knights of Christ, wise and hardy, who have almost gained the victory, go not back, lose not everlasting life for the weeping of your wives and your children. They think there is no other life but this which they see before their eyes : if they knew what is that other life without death and without sorrow they would hasten themselves to go with you into it and would count this world for a vain shadow."

On hearing these words the knights' courage came again to them ; their father and mother, their wives and children were baptized ; then in due course the soldiers of the Emperor led the two knights forth, their bodies were pierced through with spears and they died.

At length it came to the ears of the Emperor Diocletian (Maximian was away governing another part of the Empire) that St. Sebastian was a Christian, and he sent for his favourite knight, and when Sebastian was come before him, the Emperor, with a dark and angry face, spoke thus : " Sebastian, I have loved you well and have advanced you to great honour, even making you master of my palace. How have you dared secretly to be a Christian ? "

To this St. Sebastian answered :

" Noble Sir, I have long worshipped Christ and continually have I prayed to Him for your health

and for the State of Rome, and I think to pray and demand help of idols of stone is great folly."

These bold words greatly incensed Diocletian, and he ordered St. Sebastian to be bound to a tree and there to be shot at with arrows till he was dead.

Then he was led away, and his beautiful armour and his silken garments were taken from him and he was bound naked to a tree. The archers shot at him till they were weary and then they left him for dead.

That same night under cover of the darkness his friends stole out, thinking to take his body and bury it, but when they unfastened the cords binding him to the tree, they found that he yet breathed, for the arrows had not penetrated a vital part. He was conveyed secretly to a secure hiding-place, and tenderly nursed back to life. When he was strong again, his friends urged him to fly from the wrath of the Emperor, but this he would not do. Instead of flying, St. Sebastian sought occasion to see his old master once more. He stood on the steps of a temple and waited for the Emperor to pass by. And when the royal procession came he called out to the Emperor: "Most royal Sir, the bishops of the idols deceive you; the Christian men do no harm, they do but pray for your most high Majesty and for the State of Rome." Diocletian in great amazement answered: "Are you not Sebastian whom we ordered to be shot?" To that St. Sebastian replied: "I am that Sebastian, but my God has given me back my life that I may tell and testify how cruelly you persecute innocent Christian men."

Then the Emperor had him taken and brought into

his palace and there he had him beaten with stones till he was dead, and afterwards his body was cast into the Cloaca Maxima or great drain of Rome; but his friends recovered it and took up the body of the saint and buried it in one of the Catacombs.

CHAPTER IX

The Paduan and Veronese Schools

AT Padua in the first half of the fifteenth century the painter Squarcione had a large school for artists: he was a poor painter but a great teacher.

Squarcione was passionately devoted to classical art, and made a large collection of antique sculptures, in the midst of which he taught his pupils. The Paduan school was, above all, learned and intellectual, and it was to Squarcione it owed its tremendous impetus towards classicism. His influence is strongly felt in Mantegna, Cossa, Tura, and a host of other painters: the school least touched by it was the Venetian, though in the "Agony of the Garden" Giovanni Bellini shows traces of it.

We come now to Andrea Mantegna's (1431–1506) rendering of the same subject, No. 1417.

The picture is full of interesting details, and it was painted in 1459 for Giacomo Marcello, Podestà of Padua. Mantegna must have loved and been proud of the city where he learnt his art, for long after he had left it and had been for many years in the service of the Marquis of Mantua he signs a picture "Andreas Mantinia C.P.F." (civis Patavinus fecit), that is, "Andrew of Mantua, citizen of Padua, made this."

Here, in the "Agony in the Garden," he has painted

the Holy City, the city of Jerusalem, as Padua. The walls have been breached in many places and then filled in again with fresh masonry, and the nearest tower has been battered down and built up again with new stone. The big archway in the gate-house has been bricked up, as so large an opening was considered dangerous, but a small doorway could be easily defended.

The towers of the Church of the Eremitani, where Mantegna had just finished a magnificent series of frescoes, and also an equestrian statue of Gattamelata, the soldier of fortune, by Donatello, appear above the city walls. The latter had not long been set up in the city, and was a work of art of which the Paduans were justly proud, and Mantegna would no doubt be anxious to include it in a picture painted for its chief magistrate. The statue stands on a square base, but Mantegna has been obliged to turn it into a tall pillar so that it may appear above the city walls.

The disciples and their Lord have just come from Jerusalem: after eating the last supper they crossed the brook Kedron, and there Christ, with St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, went on alone, and when they reached this spot, He told them to watch with Him while He went up the hillock to pray alone. Christ kneels there in agony, and some little angels stand in the sky carrying the instruments of His Passion, and all the while, instead of watching, the disciples have gone fast asleep.

How still it is! Three little rabbits are playing quite close to the feet of St. James, and behind the kneeling figure of Christ are two more, while near by in the little

Christ's Agony in the Garden *No. 1417*

ANDREA MANTEGNA

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brook two cranes are peacefully standing, and a cormorant sits on a dead tree by the side of the stream. But soon this quiet will be rudely broken, for from a little gate in the city wall are issuing the Roman soldiers. They follow first a path beneath the wall, and then stream down the slope in a long line, and in front is the traitor Judas pointing the way. Soon he will give his Master the treacherous kiss which is to make Him a prisoner.

Mantegna among the great painters pushed his love of the Ancients to the furthest extreme. We hear of his being the friend of antiquaries and assisting in their excavations of classic sites, and in his pictures are found inscriptions actually copied from classical remains.[1] When he grew old and misfortunes fell upon him, he was forced to sell his collection of antiquities, and he offered a particularly precious and beautiful bust, "la mia cara Faustina," as he calls her, to Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, and after some haggling as to the price on the part of the lady, her agent was able to write: "Your Excellency will be glad to hear that I have at last obtained possession of Andrea Mantegna's Faustina. He gave the bust into my hands with great reluctance, recommending it to my care with much solicitude and with such demonstrations of jealous affection that if he were not to see it again for six days I feel convinced he would die."

These words were only too prophetic, for a few weeks after parting from his "cara Faustina," the poor old Mantegna died on September 13, 1506.

In the National Gallery there are three pictures by

[1] "Mantegna and Francia." J. Cartwright.

Mantegna, "The Agony in the Garden," "The Virgin and Child with John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene," and "The Triumph of Scipio," that give a very good idea of the manner in which Mantegna's style grew, altered, and matured. The "Agony in the Garden" was painted first, and in it he kept strictly to the traditional way of treating the subject; we find this arrangement, Christ kneeling on the hillock, the angels above, and the three disciples below, again and again in mediæval pictures. But the young Mantegna has set himself a stiff problem in perspective, for he has drawn St. James lying down with his feet towards the spectator. The recumbent figures of all three disciples show intense care and effort in the drawing: they have none of the ease and mastery so noticeable in Mantegna's later work.

No. 274, "Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist and St. Mary Magdalene," was painted at Mantua towards the close of the artist's life, and it is easy to see that the problems that gave him so much difficulty in his youth are all overcome and solved. How beautiful are these figures in their calm and dignified grace: they are clothed in exquisite draperies: the stuffs of which they are made are thin, and woven through with soft, iridescent colours, and here and there the folds turn to gold in the light.

How far we seem to have come from the pictures of the Virgin and Child sitting stiffly on a golden throne, set against a golden background! Mantegna's Virgin is seated beneath a canopy of red cloth, which hangs behind her and covers the chair. Behind the canopy are some dark trees, and on either side are bushes of

M.S.

The Virgin and Child, with St. John the Baptist and St. Mary Magdalene *No. 274*

ANDREA MANTEGNA

TO AVOID
DOUBLE COPY

pomegranate and lemon. And above them we see a cloudy blue-grey sky. Is it not a beautiful background? It is so quiet and restful and so subordinate to the figures that it is not till we have looked at the picture again and again that we realize how perfect it is.

The gentle Virgin, her face full of humility, holds the Child standing on her knee and the little one raises His hand in blessing; the Virgin's dress is of pink with shades of gold in the folds, and her ample blue cloak covers her head and is drawn over her knees.

St. John the Baptist stands on the left of the Virgin, his scroll in his hand, and on the back of it is Mantegna's signature, "Andreas Mantinia C.P.F."

It is difficult to imagine a more perfect representation of the Baptist than we have here. His face has the beauty of one who has spent long years alone with nature and in communion with the Unseen. Pure and unstained himself, he calls sinners to repentance, and on the other side of the throne stands Mary Magdalene the sinner, her alabaster box of ointment in her hand.

In the early pictures, their very angularities and queer perspectives seem to give them an endearing charm; we love them almost as much for what they do not do as for what they do. In Mantegna's picture we have nothing angular, nothing quaint or funny, but we feel it is full of beauty: it gives us all we want and satisfies us completely, for beauty is rightness.

The last picture by Mantegna that we shall consider is No. 902, "The Triumph of Scipio."

He painted a number of these "Triumphs," the finest being at Hampton Court. They are all painted in

the same way, in imitation of the marble bas-reliefs that the Greeks used to set beneath the eaves of their temples. It is wonderful, but it is impossible to consider it as beautiful as the "Virgin and Child."

Antonio Pisano (Pisanello, about 1390–1455) was not only a great painter, he was also the greatest medallist that the world has ever seen, and in No. 1436, "The Vision of St. Eustace," we possess the finest of his extant paintings, except his fresco in Sant' Anastasia at Verona.

In it Pisano shows us the remote forest into which St. Eustace pursued the stag. He represents the moment when the saint faces the great beast on the rock above him.

It is such a deep, dark forest that we cannot see the sky. This is really due to his faulty perspective; he makes the land mount the picture. At the top of the picture is a gloomy lake, where another stag is drinking, and wild birds are flying, wading, and swimming: there are swans, pelicans, an egret, herons, and geese, and beyond the lake, on the extreme right, there is a bear. Look carefully and you will see that besides all these, there are two hinds and another stag in the upper part of the forest.

A green, rushing river issues from this lake and disappears near the rock on which the stag is standing. St. Eustace, startled, reins back his horse, and the stag looks sadly at the knight, his noble head slightly bent by the weight of the crucifix that he bears between his branching antlers.

St. Eustace is dressed in the height of the fashion affected by young men in Pisano's time. The horse

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he is riding with its gay trappings is built more for endurance than speed.

The forest, as we have seen, is well stocked with game, so no doubt that is why the hounds that compose the saint's pack are of such varied breeds. We have first two greyhounds, one of which is brown, two foxhounds, and of these one is rather like a dachshund; two spaniels, and the dog just behind the horse's hind legs is, in appearance, something between a bear and a small cow. Most of the hounds are a good deal startled by the strange stag they have come upon, and one of the foxhounds shows his teeth, but in the foreground a hare is rushing away pursued by a greyhound, evidently the least spiritually-minded of the pack.

Pisano was one of the first painters to observe and paint animals with the same care he bestowed on human beings. There are numberless studies for the animals in this picture still extant, and he has painted every hair and feather ; you will say you have never seen a dog quite like that one behind the horse's hind legs : it is true we have not got that breed now, but as Pisanello painted it, there is every reason to suppose it existed then.

St. Eustace in his early and pagan days was known as Placidus, and he was a gallant knight in the service of the Emperor Trajan.

Though a worshipper of idols he was a very perfect knight, courteous, brave, and charitable. And the Emperor made him master of his horse.

One day, when he was out hunting, Placidus started a hart, greater and more beautiful than he had ever seen before. The hart plunged into the thickest and

darkest part of the forest, and Placidus followed after. On and on they fled till at last the hart, springing on to a high rock, turned and faced his pursuer, and as Placidus in amazement gazed on this strange quarry, "he saw between his horns the form of the holy cross shining more clear than the sun, and the image of Christ" thereon.

Then the image spoke, saying:

"Placidus, wherefore followest thou Me? I am Jesu Christ whom thou honourest ignorantly, therefore I came hither so that by this hart that thou huntest, I may hunt thee."

Placidus fell to the ground overcome with awe and amazement and said: "I believe, Lord, that Thou art He that made all things and convertest them that err."

And the image of Christ answered:

"If thou believest, go with thy wife and thy two sons and be baptized by the Bishop of the city."

Then Placidus went home, and that same day, at the hour of midnight, he and his wife and his two sons were baptized, and Placidus received the name of Eustace and his wife the name of Theospis.

The following day Eustace went back to the forest in the hope that he might again see the wondrous vision; and when he got to the high rock he found the hart with the shining cross between its antlers. And the image of Christ said:

"Eustace, thou art blessed, for thou hast taken the washings of grace, but to have the crown of victory thou must suffer much. Say to Me whether thou wilt now suffer and take temptations, or in the end of thy life?"

And Eustace answered :

" Lord, command that temptation come now, but I beseech Thee to grant to me the virtue of patience."

To him then the image of Christ :

" Be thou constant, for My grace shall keep your souls." Then our Lord ascended into heaven, and Eustace returned home and showed all this to his wife.

A few days later great trouble came upon them : first a plague fell on Eustace's retainers and servants so that they died, and afterwards a pestilence slew his horses and his cattle ; then robbers broke into his palace and carried away all his goods ; finally his enemies took all his remaining possessions from him. Then Eustace, thanking God, fled from the city with his wife and two children. And they came to the sea and took ship to the other side, but when they were about to disembark the captain of the vessel, seeing that Theospis was very fair, coveted her for his slave, and he seized her, and told Eustace roughly that he must leave his wife on the ship, or he would bid his sailors cast him into the sea. Then Eustace, seeing the sailors were many and he but one, sorrowfully took his two sons and went ashore, leaving his wife a slave in the hands of the captain.

They had not gone far before they came to a broad river, and there was neither bridge nor boat by which they might pass over. So Eustace, leaving one boy on the bank, took the other on his shoulder and swam across, and when he reached the other side he put the lad in safety on the river bank, and returned for the other. But midway in the river he heard a cry, and turning his head, he saw the child whom he had just

left carried off by a wolf who had come from a wood near by. Hardly had this terrible thing happened when he saw a lion approaching the other boy to whom he was swimming with all his might. But it was of no avail, for the lion, opening his great jaws, took up the child and bounded away with him. Then Eustace, in despair, would have drowned himself had he not been held back by the power of God.

Now though Eustace did not know it, his two children were safe, for some herdsmen pursued both the wolf and the lion and forced them to yield up the boys, who were unharmed. And the countrymen brought them up as their own.

His wife too, whom he thought for ever lost to him, was in safety also, for the wicked captain died a sudden death directly Eustace had left the ship, and his wife gained a living by keeping a humble hostelry for poor travellers.

Thinking himself bereft of both wife and children, in great sorrow Eustace hired himself to a countryman and laboured in the fields for fifteen years in great loneliness.

Though it was so long since he had left Rome, the Emperor Trajan had never forgotten Placidus, the brave and noble master of his horse, and when his enemies pressed sorely against him he bade two knights go forth and search till they found Placidus, and after a while they came to the town where Eustace, who had once been called Placidus, now dwelt. They met Eustace in the street, and accosting him, they inquired if he knew of one Placidus, but he answered: "I know not the man Placidus." But he brought

them into his house and hospitably entertained them. Then one of the two knights said privately to the other, "This man much resembles the knight Placidus whom we seek," to which his companion made answer, "Certainly he is like him; let us see if he still bears the scar of the wound he got in battle," and looking, they saw the scar of the wound, and they greeted Eustace, and told him the commands of the Emperor. Then they clothed him in rich garments, and after a journey of fifteen days they brought him before the Emperor, who greeted him right gladly, and made him again master of all his chivalry and commander of his army.

Eustace's two sons had each grown up in the belief that they had lost father, mother, and brother: they were by this time strong young men and they both joined the army under the leadership of Eustace. It chanced one day while on the march, that the two young men were sitting in the garden of a poor inn, where Eustace and all his chivalry were also lodged. This inn, though they did not know it, was kept by their own mother. It happened that their talk ran on adventures, and the one young man told the other how he had been left on the river's bank and had been carried off by a wolf, while his brother had been devoured by a lion, and straightway they rose and embraced one another, for they knew they were brothers. Now their conversation had been overheard by their mother, and she began to wonder with a full heart if these two young men were indeed her own sons. The next day she went to Eustace and said: "Sir, I pray that I may be brought again to my own land, for I am of the

country of the Romans, and here I am a stranger." And as she spoke she looked at Eustace and knew him for her husband, and they wept for joy and kissed one another. Then Theospis said: "I sat yesterday in the garden and I heard two young men talking, and I believe that they be our sons; demand of them, and they shall tell thee the truth." Then Eustace called the young men, and hearing their stories knew them to be indeed his long-lost sons; and very happily they all kissed and embraced and gave thanks for this most happy reunion. And Eustace and his wife and two sons lived in great happiness and prosperity till their martyrdom in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian.

"Unfortunately, Pisano's (No. 776) 'St. Anthony and St. George' was entirely repainted by Molteni of Milan; and although the restoration is a wonderfully careful piece of work, it is only necessary to compare colouring and brushwork with the 'St. Eustace' hanging beside it to see that nothing remains of Pisanello except the composition and the forms. The flesh-colour is of a dirty grey, contrasting sadly with the rich brownish flesh tints of the St. Eustace. The repainting is also very obvious in the drapery of St. Anthony and in the fur of St. George's surcoat."[1]

St. Anthony in the dress of a hermit stands on the left with his emblems. His bell and his stick he holds in his hands, while his pig, or rather boar, lies at his feet. St. George stands on the right, clothed in silver armour, and wearing a short cloak trimmed with fur, with his cross embroidered on the back, he has long gilt spurs on his feet: his sword is in its scabbard, and

[1] "Pisanello." G. F. Hill.

St. Anthony and St. George *No. 776*

PISANELLO (ANTONIO PISANO)

[illegible]

in his hand he carries what seems to be a walking-stick. The day is hot, so he is wearing a large straw hat with a feather in it, instead of his helmet. A queer grey dragon is coiled up at his feet, while over his shoulder appear the heads of two horses with richly gilt bridles. The figures stand near the edge of a gloomy forest. Above their heads in a golden halo is the Virgin with the Child in her arms, but both the saints seem entirely unconscious of the vision.

St. George, for all his silver armour and the cross on his cloak, is not a very heroic figure, and it is difficult to believe that he has really dealt with that dragon, small though it is. Pisanello was working at Ferrara when he painted this picture, and St. George is just like the gentlemen the painter saw about the Marquis's Court. St. Anthony is the real hero of the picture ; he is old and bent with age, but even so, he is bigger and taller than the elegant St. George. His face is full of fire and vigour, and we can well believe he easily vanquished any devils he may have met in that dark wood. He seems to have come from the forest in a great hurry on hearing the approach of St. George : the alert-looking boar is taking a brief rest at his side, but his energetic old master needs no rest, and vigorously harangues the younger saint. Why is he in such a hurry and what is he saying ? We shall never know, and whatever it is St. George is clearly quite unmoved by it.

Girolamo dai Libri (1474–1556) was an illuminator of manuscripts like his father before him, and we know that he was a great friend of his fellow-craftsman Francesco Morone. The latter painter and his father, Domenico, belonged to the school of Mantegna, and in

Girolamo's picture, No. 748, "The Virgin, the Infant Christ, and St. Anne," Mantegna's influence is very strongly marked; it is far less classic in feeling than Mantegna's "Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene," but there are many points of resemblance. In Girolamo's picture, the sky with its procession of light clouds is very like Mantegna's, and so are the colour and texture of the draperies, and the lemon tree with its golden fruit, yet Girolamo's is a much more romantic imagination than Mantegna's, though it is subdued and strengthened by the classic tradition.

A particularly delightful picture, it has a very original and unusual arrangement.

The Virgin sits on her mother's knee. St. Anne is clothed in rich, oriental-looking garments of purple and gold, and on her head is a golden-yellow turban. The Virgin's dress is of crimson and cloth of gold, her blue cloak is lined with green, and her head is covered with a brownish-green drapery. The little Child stands on one foot, supported on His mother's hand, and one of His small hands is raised in blessing, while the other holds a branch of bay or laurel.

The two women and the Child sit beneath a charming little lemon tree, and across the picture runs a light trellis covered with roses. Beneath the Virgin's feet is a dead dragon, while quite in the foreground are three little angels who are below the level of the picture, so that they are only seen to the waist: one plays a mandoline, one a violin, and the third sings from an open book.

The background is a beautiful landscape, the blue

The Virgin and Child, with St. Anne *No. 748*

GIROLAMO DAI LIBRI

sky is full of fleecy clouds; a brimming, placid river flows through a pleasant country full of trees, and at the water's edge stands a fine castle.

It is remarkable that Girolamo dai Libri, though a miniature painter, is very sparing in his use of gold.

CHAPTER X

Venetian School

THE early Venetian school is extraordinarily sane and healthy, a well-balanced whole where no one characteristic is exalted at the expense of the rest. The other schools of the peninsula, however, each specialized in some particular branch of their art. The Tuscans, for instance, have a great liveliness of mind, an intense interest in scientific problems, and as to life an overwhelming curiosity. The Sienese are far less thoughtful and original, but they have a strong sense of beauty and devotion. The Umbrian is allied to both these schools, because though Perugino achieved beauty and pietism combined in the highest degree, Piero della Francesca had all the qualities of his own school, yet was as much interested in the scientific and intellectual side of art as any of the Tuscans. The Paduan painters belonged to the learned school, and drew their inspiration from classic times : the Ferrarese showed the same liveliness of mind as the Tuscans, but they were so fascinated by the classical learning of the Paduans that they carried it on till it verged dangerously on mere pedantry.

Now the Venetians loved beauty before all things, though on the intellectual and scientific side they were almost as good as the inland painters ; with the Vene-

tians we have both thought and feeling, but of the two the latter is the stronger. Now why is there this marked difference between the inland cities and the seaboard one ? Is not the answer to be found in the life of the people ?

The free towns of the peninsula, situated but a short distance from each other, intensely self-conscious and patriotic, and nourishing ideas of individual aggrandizement, were in a continual state of warfare. By degrees their liberties were undermined, and supreme authority usurped by one man more powerful than the rest, and each city with its surrounding territory was governed by a tyrant. These despots were continually quarrelling ; they held power of life and death over their subjects, and the cities were in a perpetual state of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy, bloodshed and murder.

The great families had their villas and pleasure-houses in the country outside the walls, but they also had each their strong fortress-like castle in the city, to which they withdrew in time of trouble.

Men and dynasties rose and fell with incredible swiftness, and treachery and bloodshed alternated in the streets with pageants of the greatest splendour. Consequently the experiences of the citizens were so many and so varied, that their intellectual growth was forced, and men lived fast both in body and mind.

Now the case of Venice was far otherwise ; she was set by herself in loneliness in the midst of the sea, she never became a great military power, and she never entrusted her army to the leadership of one of her own citizens, but hired a captain of mercenaries, paid and

directed by the State. Her navy had the greater part of the carrying trade of the world, and her admirals were chosen from her noblest families. Venice, on the way to Constantinople, was the gate of the East, and to her markets came spices and rare carpets, and all the wonders of the Orient. Appealing as she did to the imagination of her citizens, the State was well served. Venice was a Republic, but not in the modern democratic sense. She was, it is true, ruled by her citizens, but she was careful to keep the power in the hands of comparatively few, those considered best fitted to govern and direct her destinies, and the Doge, whose office was for life, was chosen by a Council of Ten.

For a long time Venice held herself apart from the leagues and quarrels of the other Italian cities. Under a just and merciful rule her people and her subject towns prospered. Guarded by the sea, she alone of all the cities never suffered foreign invasion, and conspiracies and massacres were practically unknown within her bounds. Instead of the gloomy streets of fortified castles of the inland towns, marble palaces and comfortable houses lined the waterways of Venice. The Republic was very like England, a nation of great shopkeepers, and under her beneficent rule her citizens were able to develop slowly and in peace.

The Venetian began very much later than the other schools. The earliest painters were the Vivarini of the island of Murano, and the two earliest pictures in the National Gallery belonging to the school are the two panels, No. 768, "St. Peter and St. Jerome," and No. 1284, "St. Francis and St. Mark," by Antonio Vivarini, who was painting between 1440 and 1476.

The Beato Ferretti *No. 668*

CARLO CRIVELLI

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY

The colour in these pictures is extremely rich and beautiful, and there is very little trace of archaistic feeling.

The early Venetian masters were so nearly contemporary that it seems best, as he is the earliest in style, to take first a picture by Carlo Crivelli (about 1440–1493), No. 668, " The Beato Ferretti."

Gabriele Ferretti was a Superior of the Franciscans in the March of Ancona. He died in the year 1456. In 1486 his body was raised from its resting-place, where it had remained uncorrupted by time, and placed in the Church of St. Francesco ad Alto at Ancona.

Crivelli lived at Ascoli in the March of Ancona, and most likely he was commissioned to paint a picture in honour of the local holy man. The title of blessed was by no means as great as that of saint; still it was a very high one, and without doubt, every one of the Blessed Ferretti's countrymen felt honoured that it should have been bestowed on a fellow-citizen.

Crivelli has painted a saint and his vision, and the picture is bathed in peace and serenity. Very far away is the sea with its ships, and the blue mountains that form its coastline, and nearer is a little city and a broad highway where travellers pass to and fro.

The Blessed Ferretti came through that town, and along the road, and across the valley, till he climbed the path that winds up the hill past the red church. There is a deep dip between the quiet spot where the blessed one kneels and the main road, because the white cowled head of a monk who has just passed by can be seen disappearing down the slope.

When the Blessed Ferretti got to this peaceful

corner, he turned aside from the pathway, and taking off his wooden clogs he knelt down, his book in his hand, to meditate and pray.

And while he is rapt away in prayer, a lovely vision is vouchsafed to him, and his book drops from his hand. There above him are the gracious and dignified figures of the Mother and Child who, surrounded by a glory, have come from heaven to visit him : all about them are little golden cherubs who peep round the glory at the two travellers from the skies. The saint is breathless with adoration at the sight of the vision that he alone can see. The old monk going down the path is quite unconscious of it, neither do the travellers going to the little city perceive the heavenly light. The duck and the duckling play together in the quiet pool, and the goldfinch turns his back to the vision as he hops on the branch of the dead tree. A lovely peaceful scene beneath the soft, calm sky.

You will notice that though Crivelli paints figures and animals with the greatest care and closest observation, he seems never to have really looked at rocks or trees. In this picture the trees are of an entirely unknown species, none of them are in full foliage, and most are mere broken stumps. The stream winds past cliffs which seem hardly as substantial as cardboard, and are more like brown cotton-wool than rocks. The red brick church is built in the Italian-Gothic manner, but the detail belongs to the early Renaissance. Another mark of the Renaissance lies in the "swag" of fruit that Crivelli has painted across the top of his picture.

The finest work by Crivelli in the National Gallery

is No. 739, "The Annunciation," and its details are full of interest and merit the closest attention.

Within a gorgeous palace the Virgin kneels in a little room, half study, half bedchamber: her high bed with its red curtain ready to be pulled across to hide it is behind her, and just above it is a shelf on which stand many things, plates and a vessel of water, an earthenware jar, and a candlestick, all, when she is in bed, well within reach of the Virgin's hand.

The painted ceiling of her room, and that of the open loggia in the next story, are such as may still be seen in the ducal palace at Venice. The oriental carpets, used as hangings instead of floor coverings, were highly prized, and more commonly seen in Venice than elsewhere, for nearly all the trade from the East passed through Venice, and there was constant intercourse between the rulers of Venice and the Grand Turk.

The Virgin kneels meekly, her book before her, and the spirit of God in the shape of a dove in a ray of light comes down to her through a little arch pierced in the wall of the palace.

The Archangel Gabriel and St. Emidius kneel in the street outside the Virgin's grated window. Gabriel, truly a "splendid angel newly drest," has foliated decorations like wings on his shoulders and arms, besides the pair he uses for flying: a red jewel burns on his forehead, and he carries a lily in his hand. The dainty little bishop with the curls who accompanies him is St. Emidius, the patron saint of Ascoli, and in his hand he carries a little model of the city.

As we have seen, the painters of the Middle Ages

escaped from the sameness of their subjects by painting small scenes from the lives of the saints in the predellas and sides of their altar-pieces. These little pictures were often painted from the artist's immediate surroundings, and sometimes it is possible actually to identify the street or landscape that forms the background of the picture.

Now Crivelli has painted the whole of this great work much in the way the other artists have treated their predella pictures. He has put the Virgin in a Venetian palace, and the Angel Gabriel and St. Emidius kneel in a Venetian street, while the life of the city goes on all around them. On their left, at the top of a steep flight of steps, stand two white-frocked monks talking to a Venetian gentleman in red, and a small girl peeps round into the street below. Does she see the angel and the saint kneeling there? It is certain that the monks and their companion are quite unconscious of their presence. A little further on, another street crosses this one at right angles to it, and a grave and reverend signor paces slowly along it deep in thought. Then come three steps, and on the steps beneath an archway a man stands, looking up and shading his eyes from the heavenly rays. Beyond the archway is another street or courtyard: a grand lady, richly dressed and followed by her duenna in red, passes by, and she is attracting the attention of two young gentlemen who have stopped talking to watch her, while behind again we can just catch a glimpse of a poor woman, with a metal pot balanced on her head, and carrying a weaving shuttle in her hand.

On the top of the archway, where no doubt there

are marble seats, though we cannot see them, a noble Venetian gentleman has been reading; his book lies on the carpet hanging: he has evidently just had an important dispatch brought to him, for he is reading it, while the messenger stands before him cap in hand. High in the air are many pigeons, fluttering round the perches that stand out from the walls.

Carlo Crivelli learnt his art in Venice, but later in life he settled at the little town of Ascoli, and at the foot of the picture are three coats of arms and an inscription. The arms are those of the Bishop of Ascoli, Pope Innocent VIII, and of Ascoli itself. The inscription "Libertas Ecclesiastica," means "Independence under the Protection of the Church," for Ascoli enjoyed a charter given by the Pope in 1482, conferring on it municipal liberty.

"The arrival of the charter on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, was celebrated henceforth by ceremonies on that day, in which a procession to the church of the Annunziata was a prominent feature. Our picture was painted for that church, where it remained until 1790."[1]

It seems very probable that this picture was painted for one of the City Guilds of Ascoli, and that when Crivelli was commissioned to paint the Annunciation, he was told that he must include St. Emidius, the city's patron saint, and Crivelli, willing to flatter the innocent vanity of his fellow-citizens, set the scene in the street of a magnificent city.

Towards the end of his career, in 1490, Crivelli

[1] Handbook to the National Gallery. E. T. Cook.

was knighted, and from thenceforth he was very careful to add "Miles" to his signature.

The next picture to which we come, No. 724, "The Madonna and Child enthroned with St. Jerome and St. Sebastian" (called the Madonna of the Swallow), has a charming little cartel fastened with four red pins, bearing this inscription:

CAROLVS CRIVELLVS VENETVS MILES PINXIT.

This picture gives the impression of the utmost richness and splendour. The Virgin is crowned, and wears an under-robe of cloth of gold, while from head to foot she is wrapt in a dark blue cloak, stiff with golden embroideries, and she sits upon a marble throne draped with hangings of cloth of gold. Two bowls, one containing single carnations and the other fruit and flowers, stand at the side.

On the top of the throne, and along this ledge, are placed a gourd and a pear, and amidst all this gorgeousness a swallow has flown in and perched on the throne just above the Virgin's head. And from this incident the picture has been named "The Madonna of the Swallow."

On His mother's knee sits the sad-looking little Child holding an apple in His hand; round His neck is a string of coral beads, and from it hangs a coral pendant set in gold, such as Italian children still wear to protect them against the evil eye.

On the left of the throne stands St. Jerome: in his right hand he holds two books, and on the top of them is balanced the model of a little church, from the doors of which issue rays of light; it is most likely a model

of St. Jerome's church at Bethlehem, and the books are the Vulgate, his translation of the Scriptures into Latin. St. Jerome is attracting the Baby's attention to it. Now that tiny church with its rays of light would make a delightful plaything for a little child, but how about the saint ? Crivelli has painted St. Jerome as a most alarming old gentleman, and he points to his model in a menacing fashion : " Look at it, but touch it if you dare," he seems to say. St. Jerome has his lion with him, but he has shrunk to the size of a poodle, and he looks absurd with his mouth wide open and his tongue out. On the right stands St. Sebastian, dressed as a noble youth in the fashion of Crivelli's day, and one cannot help feeling his clothes must have taken up most of his thoughts and a good deal of his money. The fastenings alone must have required considerable time ; the points attaching his hose to his upper garments hang down below his tunic, and his cloth-of-gold sleeves seem fastened in the same manner : they are laced and slashed to allow of the fine white shirt being pulled through, and the Virgin's sleeves are cut in the same fashion. St. Sebastian also wears a short cloak of cloth of gold, thrown back over the left shoulder to show the band of big pearls that encircles his arm. On his head is a chaplet of precious stones, and he wears a gold chain with a jewelled clasp on his breast. In his right hand he delicately holds an arrow, emblem of his martyrdom, while in his left is the handle of his sword, and the sheath is fastened to his girdle by attachments of red leather. A bow lies near his feet behind him.

In the predella, from left to right, is St. Katherine

of Alexandria with her wheel; she is richly dressed, and like St. Sebastian wears a chaplet of precious stones upon her head.

St. Jerome in the desert kneels before a crucifix, on which perches a vulture, and with energetic fury the saint beats himself with a stone. To the right there is a tree with a broken branch, on which convenient peg hangs St. Jerome's scarlet hat.

The desert seems crowded with animals: there are a hare, a rabbit, a crane, a serpent, a deer, and across the stream on the other side a wolf is lying curled up in a cave. Close by his master's side, looking very pious and noble, lies the lion; an evil-looking dragon slinks by him, his tail between his legs, but he puts out his tongue at the saint as he goes past.

On the left is St. Jerome's small but neat hut, and inside is a wooden stool in front of the shelves where he keeps his books and candle. In the distance is a town, apparently inhabited by Moors or Arabs. Some of them in white robes and turbans row on the river that flows past the city on its way to the desert.

In the middle panel we have the Nativity. The Holy Family are sheltering beneath a pentise, built against a ruin. There are two shelves: on one is a water-jug with a towel close by, and on a nail in the wall a small wallet is hanging. Joseph is asleep as usual, and the Child lies on the ground on a corner of His mother's cloak as she kneels above Him; the ox and the ass stand meekly beside them. In the distance we see the shepherds and their flocks, and the angel of good tidings is coming through the sky.

The martyrdom of St. Sebastian is represented as

taking place in the red-brick courtyard of some Italian palace. Poor St. Sebastian is not only being martyred, but tortured at the same time. He is hung up to the branch of a tree by one arm, so that his feet scarcely touch the ground. Three nearly naked archers (one is using a crossbow) are shooting at him, determined not to miss at half a yard. One of the arrows has pierced the saint's foot, and he draws it up in pain. Near the tree a brown greyhound with a red collar, who is apparently used to martyrdoms, is quietly waiting, and a swallow, also undisturbed by the shooting, has flown through these sunny courtyards, and has perched on the wall.

The last picture in the predella shows the fight between St. George and the Dragon. St. George, in his high-peaked red saddle, is urging his terrified horse against the foe. His lance, which has pierced the dragon's neck, has broken in two, and now he has drawn his great sword, and is having at the wicked beast again. Truly "it was a gallant fight." On the other side of a little bridge is the king's castle, and crowds are watching with breathless interest the encounter that is going on between the knight and the dragon. The princess, a tiny figure in red, is kneeling among the rocks. These strange rocks are of the same geological formation as those in the Beato Ferretti picture, and form an arch through which we see the setting sun.

The picture No. 807, "Madonna and Child enthroned with St. Francis and St. Sebastian," is painted in the same manner as the Annunciation, that is, with great magnificence and glorification of the saintly subjects, combined with the representation of many

simple things that Crivelli has painted for his own pleasure.

The Virgin is seated on a marble throne, which is partly draped with crimson and gold brocade, and behind the throne is stretched more brocade, but this time of blue and gold. Gorgeously dressed, with a jewelled crown upon her head, the Virgin sits on her throne, but the little Child is quite unmoved by His mother's grandeur, and lovingly puts His arms round her neck. On their left stands St. Francis of Assisi, pointing to his stigmata, and St. Sebastian, stuck all over with arrows, and naked, save for an embroidered loin cloth, is on their right. There is yet another person in the picture whom we must not overlook, for she, so the inscription tells us, was the donor of this picture "at no small cost." There she kneels, a tiny nun, fat and plain, squeezed in between St. Francis' foot and the step of the throne.

Well! there you have the important part of the picture, the part that the little nun cared about, but see how many things Crivelli added to please himself! At the feet of St. Francis he has painted an inquiring snail crawling along, evidently much astonished at the exalted company it has got into. In front of the throne are daisies and other little flowers, and on the arms of the throne vases of flowers, while on the ledge above the Virgin's head is set a regular flower border, and as if that were not enough, he has added two pears, a peach, and a gourd.

There are two inscriptions in this picture: the long one tells of the nun's gift, and the short but very prominent one on the steps of the throne is in gold

on a blue ground, "Opus Caroli Crivelli Miles [*sic*] 1491."

Carlo Crivelli was a good painter, and certainly deserved his knighthood, and there is not the slightest doubt he was justly proud of it.

As we have seen, the princes of Italy were in nothing more magnificent than in their patronage of Art, and they attracted to their courts painters and sculptors from all parts of the civilized world. We know that Roger van der Weyden was in Rome in 1450, and Justus of Ghent was working in 1474 at Urbino for Federigo of Montefeltro, while pictures by followers of the two Van Eycks were to be seen in Italy long before that date.

We now come to Antonello da Messina (about 1430–1479), a painter who was strongly influenced by the Flemish masters, and his No. 1418, "St. Jerome in his Study," combines the charm of both the Italian and the Flemish schools, for it shows the refinement and sense of beauty belonging to the Italians and the simplicity and richness peculiar to the Flemings.

St. Jerome, a dignified but somewhat worldly-looking ecclesiastic, sits before a desk, reading a book, on a dais reached by some steps. His chair is inlaid, and his cardinal's hat lies on a chest behind him. On some shelves close to his hand are his books, some pots, and an enamelled box: a crucifix is set facing him, and his inkhorn hangs on a nail. On the side of his desk a scroll is pinned.

Before he ascended his dais, St. Jerome slipped off his thick shoes, and left them at the foot of the steps. On the ledge that is in a line with the top step is, first,

a pot in which a small shrub is growing, then comes a vase of carnations, and next to the carnations lies a contented cat: just above the cat a towel hangs on a nail. The dais is set in a large hall with a beautiful inlaid marble pavement; to right and left there is a corridor, the former with a vaulted roof, supported by slender pillars, and the lion is slowly pacing down it towards his master's study. In the foreground is a long low step and on it, stepping daintily, are a partridge and a peacock; there is a brass bowl for them to drink from, and a big stone archway encloses the whole picture.

The architecture of this strange room is Italian Gothic, which has none of the rude vigour of the northern style. In Italian Gothic, also, owing to the stronger sunlight, windows are smaller in proportion to the amount of wall-space than in the darker northern lands. This study is lit by two small trefoil-headed windows, which are clearly unglazed, and through them the swallows are flying.

And now let us go down the corridor and look out of that little window which measures perhaps two by one and a half inches.

First we see two people in company with a little white dog, walking down a pathway which leads to a river; and on the water is a boat in which two people are sitting, while a small child dressed in red is standing amongst the reeds on the farther bank. Across the river, on the other side, is a road along which two horsemen are riding to a castle far away.

Compare No. 186, the portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, by Jan van Eyck: especially notice the

mirror that hangs on the wall between the figures; its minute finish is even more remarkable than Antonello's view from the window.

The next picture by Antonello is his wonderful "Crucifixion," No. 1168.

The crucifixion is the most painful and poignant of all subjects: the agony high on the cross, the agony of Christ's mother and His friends on the earth below. What can be more painful as the subject for a picture? Here we have the worn figure of Christ on the cross, and the two sad watchers, the Virgin and St. John, at its foot. Deep grief is here, it is true, but there is no agony, and above all, no horror, and over it all hovers a heavenly peace. The drama has been played out, and now there is rest, till the story shall be taken up triumphantly on Easter morning.

Could anything be more pure and beautiful than that pearly sky? There is no sunlight, and yet the whole picture glows with a soft radiance. It is nature seen through the imagination of a great artist, a poet who expressed himself in line and colour instead of words. Christ's figure on the cross is set against this soft sky, and beneath His feet the sky joins that most wonderful distance of transparent blue, composed of dream-like water and mountains. Then comes a brown landscape that slopes to a river, or is it a moat that goes round the walls that enclose Jerusalem and its gardens? The city itself we cannot see, but a party of men, some of whom are on horseback, are going along the pathway below the wall. Nearer at hand there is a green sward, overgrown with bushes, and through the undergrowth come three figures: one is robed in red, and behind,

toiling up the hill, are two men carrying a ladder; these five persons must surely be the three Maries, and Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who are coming to take Christ down from the cross. Close at hand are skulls and bones, and just behind the cross the ground is thickly strewn with them.

Though we can see that the sky and backgound cost Antonello hours of thought and careful work, yet he has subordinated it wholly to the three figures, Christ on His cross, and the Virgin and St. John at His feet. Each part is welded together into a whole, and the picture speaks of a noble grief tempered with a heavenly peace.

Antonello's portrait of himself, No. 1141, is extraordinarily interesting, for he looks so entirely a man of his time. In that age of great saints and amazing sinners, he knows good and evil, not in the tentative, conventional way of our day, but fully, entirely, from end to end. Nothing shocked him in the way of wickedness, and no saintliness surprised him; all was to him a manifestation of life, the life that the men of the Renaissance lived so fully and so completely.

It is well to compare this portrait with the small "Head of a Man," No. 626, by Antonello's contemporary, Botticelli. The latter, notwithstanding its charm and extraordinary delicacy, is much colder and drier in colour than the former. The colour in Antonello's portrait is wonderfully rich, but subdued, and the whole picture is full of suppressed life. No matter how strongly they may control their colour, the Venetians always give us the impression of amazing

vitality, and this small portrait is a splendid example of the quality.

The very charming No. 599, "The Infant Christ asleep on the lap of the Virgin," is now ascribed to Marco Basaiti (painting before 1503, died after 1530), though at one time it was given to Bellini.

The little Child lies fast asleep on the Virgin's lap, and the young mother clasps her hands in prayer as she looks fondly at Him. We feel that she dares not move for fear she may awaken Him, but she would like to be kneeling in adoration before Him, in an ecstasy of love. The Virgin is resting during the midday heat; behind her, in the distance, is a small hill city; a river runs round the foot of the little eminence on which it stands, and in the far distance rise some blue mountains.

The townsfolk graze their animals in these meadows; there is plenty of water for them, for there is a well-head on the right, the bucket raised by means of a long pole used as a lever. An eastern-looking figure is driving some cattle across the picture, and two sheep, one of which is of a Syrian variety with strange lop ears, follow their guardian. To the left of the Virgin another cowherd sits resting on the ground, clothed only in a white shirt, and near him a stork is having a fierce fight with a snake. On one of the branches of a leafless tree a grey-beaked raven is sitting.

In No. 694, by Catena (date of birth unknown, died 1531), we again have a picture of St. Jerome in his study, but this time it belongs entirely to the Italian Renaissance.

Ruskin, in "Verona and other Lectures," describes the picture thus :—

"Everything in it is exquisite, complete, and pure: there is not a particle of dust in the cupboards, nor a cloud in the air: the wooden shutters are dainty, the candlestick is dainty, the saint's blue hat is dainty, and its violet tassel, and its ribbon, and his blue cloak, and his spare pair of shoes, and his little brown partridge, it is all a perfect quintessence of innocent luxury—absolute delight without one drawback in it, nor taint of the devil anywhere."

St. Jerome sits before a large desk, reading in his quiet study and secure from interruption; he is deep in scholarly work. Though everything about him is so clean and beautiful there is no softness or enervating luxury. The saint sits on a wooden bench that runs round the room, and the wall behind from the seat to about the height of two feet is hung with green velvet.

A deep, capacious cupboard is on the saint's right, and inside are his big books, a flask, and a pricket candlestick. The lion, a placid, comfortable animal, lies asleep, and a little partridge is examining St. Jerome's shoes with much curiosity. From the large square unglazed window we can see a blue lake with buildings on its bank.

The mediæval painters are very fond of representing a partridge in their pictures of hermit saints, because there is an early legend concerning this bird.

It is said that when St. John the Evangelist was a very old man he had a partridge given him and, the little bird becoming very tame, the saint used to spend much of his leisure time playing with it.

One day it chanced that some young men on their way to the forest passed by, and one of their company

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laughed and said : " See how yonder old man playeth with a bird like a child."

Then St. John, knowing in his wisdom what the young man said, called him to his side and asked :

" My son, what dost thou carry in thy hand ? "

And the young man answered :

" A bow, fair sir, with which I will shoot birds and beasts in the forest there." And as he spoke, the young man bent his bow, and held it for the saint to look at, but when the aged man spoke no more he loosened the bowstring again. Seeing this, the saint asked the young man :

" Why dost thou now unbend thy bow ? "

And the young man answered, smiling :

" Because if it were long bent it would be weaker to shoot with."

Then said the Apostle :

" My son, in like manner does the mind of man need rest and relaxation : were it always bent, it would become too weak. Wherefore, my son, after meditating on divine things, I play with my little friend here," and the old man held the partridge tenderly to his breast as the young men passed by and went on towards the forest.

The earliest picture we have in the National Gallery by Giovanni Bellini (first mentioned 1459, died 1516) is No. 1233, "The Blood of the Redeemer." The stiffness and rigidity of the style is at once noticeable, but what is equally remarkable is the thoughtful and poetic treatment of the subject. Bellini's spirit is here far in advance of his technical powers.

The sad, worn figure of Christ stands in a little paved

court, and is seen in the cold white light of the dawn: how beautiful it is out there beyond, in the valley! A little angel with a child's face and red shoes holds up a cup to catch the blood which is pouring from the wounded side.

At a time when the Renaissance was in the full tide, and when among cultured and artistic persons an almost open paganism prevailed, Giovanni Bellini painted pictures that were essentially Christian in feeling, and he very seldom would undertake subjects from the Greek and Roman mythologies for his patrons. It is therefore extremely interesting that in the frieze that surrounds the court in this picture, we find two classical subjects represented.

"On the right is Mucius Scaevola before Lars Porsena, thrusting his hand into the fire,—the ancient type of heroism and readiness to suffer: on the opposite side is a pagan sacrifice, with Pan playing the pipes, signifying the propitiatory sacrifices of the ancients, and thus foreshadowing the sacrifice on the cross."[1]

Giovanni Bellini's "Christ's Agony in the Garden," No. 726, will at once remind you of Mantegna's of the same subject, No. 1417, and a curious little story links the two pictures together.

Giovanni and his brother Gentile were Venetian painters, who had learnt their art in the workshop of their father, Jacopo, who was also an artist. Mantegna, who was working at Padua, not far from Venice, became acquainted with this family of painters, and after a while he married Niccolosia Bellini, the sister of Giovanni and Gentile.

[1] A Handbook to the National Gallery. E. T. Cook.

Now at about this time Jacopo made a sketch for a picture of the "Agony in the Garden" (now in the British Museum), though as far as we know he never painted the picture, but his son Giovanni and his son-in-law Mantegna both saw his sketch, and they both painted pictures (keeping Jacopo's drawing in their minds) of the "Agony in the Garden." You will find it extremely interesting to compare the two paintings with the drawing.

In Bellini's picture Christ kneels on the hillock, the little angel bears Him the sacramental cup, and His followers are asleep. Jerusalem, that city set on a hill, is still in the sunlight, but the sad, mysterious hour of the day is approaching, when earth and heaven draw near together to mourn for the sun that has left them.

Coming towards the little bridge are the Roman soldiers, led by Judas, but it will be dark before he reaches the hillock and gives his traitorous kiss. Bellini has painted a picture of agony, and he shows us the tragedy that is about to take place. Yet what an extraordinary peace and calm pervades it. It is a truly heavenly picture, showing us sorrowful anguish at its highest and best.

> "Grief should be,
> Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate:
> Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free:
> Strong to consume small troubles: to commend
> Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end."

Giovanni Bellini, during a large part of his long life, was painter to the State, and the splendid picture,

No. 189, "The Doge Leonardo Loredano," is one of his official portraits of her rulers, the only one known to be still in existence. Vasari tells us that certain portraits by Giovanni gave great satisfaction, more especially this of the Doge Loredano.

A more dignified and stately presentment of a ruler cannot be imagined. It is entirely simple, but it has the monumental quality common to all the finest portraits of the world.

Lorenzo Loredano was Doge of Venice from 1501 to 1521. He came of one of the most honourable families of Venice, and had served the State ably and honestly for many years before he was elected Doge at the age of sixty-six.

During more than half his term of office, Venice was in the greatest peril, for in 1508 the Treaty of Cambrai was signed, between Pope Julius II, the Emperor Maximilian, Louis XII of France, and Ferdinand of Aragon and Naples. The treaty had for its object the partition of the inland possessions of the Republic of Venice. Venice fought with men, money, and the most able diplomacy, and though surrounded by enemies, the Venetians were united to a man, and the State had no treachery from within to fear; so at last after a struggle lasting ten years, she was able to make peace, drained of men and treasure, but still in possession of her inland cities. During the war the Doge Loredano, who was by no means a rich man, sent all his plate to the mint to be coined for the use of the Republic.

Our last picture is No. 812, "Landscape with the Death of St. Peter Martyr," and the title is sin-

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Christ's Agony in the Garden *No. 726*

GIOVANNI BELLINI

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gularly just, for it is first a landscape, and quite secondarily a representation of the martyrdom.

St. Peter Martyr, a saint more to be admired in Bellini's day than ours, was a Dominican friar, born in 1205, "a man wise, constant, and religious, which doubted nothing." During the thirteenth century the heretical sect of the Cathari were very strong. Peter Martyr believed that all who differed from the orthodox Church would lose their souls, so he used every persuasion to drive the heretics back into the fold, but when he found he could not convince them by argument he resorted to persecution, for he had been appointed Inquisitor-General by Pope Honorius III. At last the severity of his methods roused the fury of the people, and on his journey from Como to Milan he was waylaid and murdered. The old legend says "that when he approached nigh the city a man of the heretics, which was hired thereto, ran upon him and smote him with his falchion on the head," and St. Peter Martyr, "he that murmured not nor grudged not, suffered patiently the cruelty of the tyrants . . . and said his *credo* and *in manus tuas*, commending his spirit unto the hands of the Lord."

And now let us look closely at this very beautiful picture.

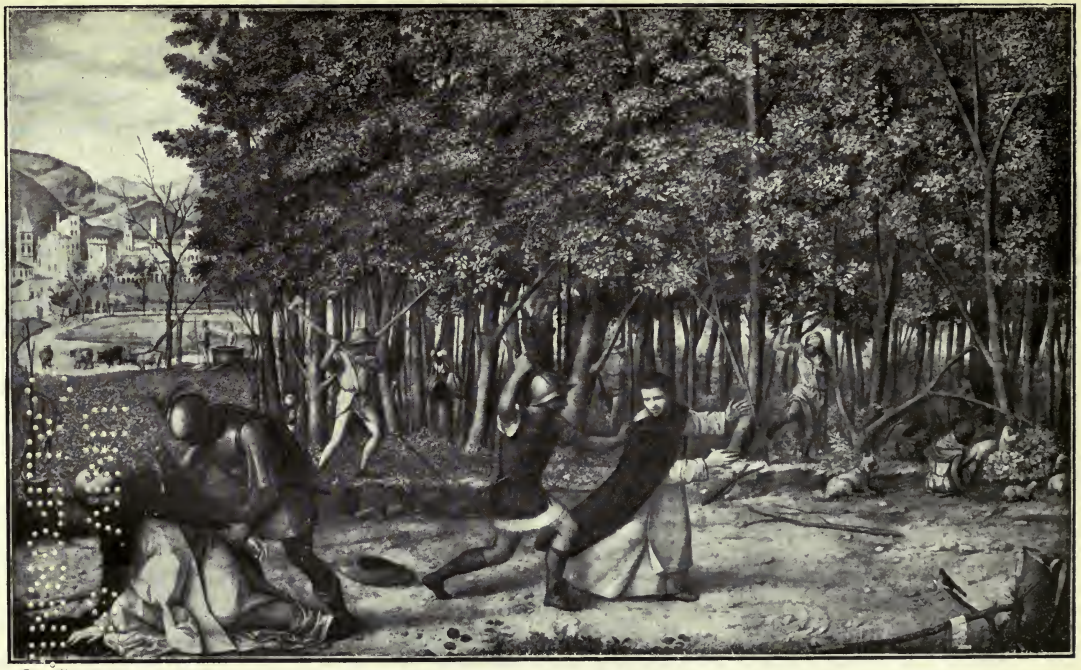
Far away over those blue hills winds the white road, which loses itself in the narrow streets of the little walled city where Peter has doubtless been persuading the heretics with relentless vigour: he has left it now, and is on his way to Milan. The town is on the banks of a swift river, spanned by a bridge of four arches; over it runs the main highway, across the sunny fields,

towards the wood that fills nearly half the picture. Just within the shade of the trees is a round well-head, for water is very precious and necessary in this hot country: the cows that are going slowly along the road have just been watered by the herds who are driving them: and at last we reach the little copse. Though the leaves are so thick it is not dark and dismal, like that terrible wood where St. George met St. Anthony: it is gay and cheerful, for though it gives a grateful shade we can still see the brightness beyond.

Yet, sad to say, some of these trees are being cut down, for two strong wood-cutters are busy; their bag hangs on a branch near by, and their long-handled spade leans against a tree. One of the wood-cutters, older than the rest, is preparing a meal for the others. A shepherd with a little child is minding some sheep on the right with the help of a small, white, woolly dog. Close by a donkey is resting, his wooden saddle has been taken off and is on the ground beside him. A man who looks like a hunter (his back is towards us) walks through the wood. The whole picture is full of the most perfect peace.

But what is going on in this peaceful landscape? Nothing less than the martyrdom of Peter Martyr and his companion. They have been waylaid by these ruthless soldiers, who have been hiding among the trees till the two friars passed by.

Peter Martyr's companion is trying to run away, but the man-at-arms has just seized him; he wears a leathern jerkin and a helmet and dagger. The other murderer is clothed in chain armour, and wears a steel cuirass and a helmet with two red feathers in it. He



Landscape, with The Death of St. Peter Martyr *No. 812*

GIOVANNI BELLINI

is placing his dagger carefully in Peter's heart, while he holds his wrist in his other hand. But now look at the martyr's face. Is it not beautiful ? How gently he sinks from life to death. There is no cry or struggle : the wood-cutters and the shepherd and the little child are quite unconscious of the tragedy that is going on so near them, and a little bird sits quietly on the bough from which hangs the scroll that tells us that Johannes Bellinus painted this. Do you understand ? This is the representation of the cold-blooded murder of two defenceless men. Surely we might expect that such a subject would fill us with horror and disgust, but instead of that we leave the picture, our minds full of peace and trust—and why should this be ? Is it not because the artist has here painted his philosophy of life ? He has not ignored the sorrow, suffering, and sin, but he has represented it penetrated through and through with the calmness and peace of the beauty of holiness. With him faith is stronger than fear, calm than storm, and love than hate.

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